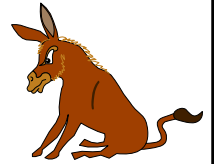


Town & Country Democrat



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Sacramento's Out Of Iraq Forum Rocks The Capital City

On January 7 anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan, author David Dionisi, 4th Congressional District candidate Charles Brown, and surprise guests--academy-award winning Sean Penn and author Norm Solomon spoke to a packed SEIU hall in Sacramento. With nearly 200 people inside and a large overflow crowd gathered out on the sidewalk, Sacramentans demonstrated their impatience and frustration with U.S. involvement in Iraq.

Dave Dionisi, author of "American Hiroshima" and a former U.S. military intelligence officer, provided insight on pre-9-11 intelligence. This information should have been utilized to prevent the attacks on the World Trade Center. He also discussed U.S. foreign policy driven by the combination of controlling oil reserves in the Middle East in league with the U.S. military-industrial machine that has promoted war to support corporate profits.

The next speaker was retired USAF Lt. Col. Charles Brown, a Democratic candidate for California's 4th Congressional District. He is running against incumbent Republican John



Author and media critic Norman Solomon, mother/activist Cindy Sheehan, and actor Sean Penn.

Photo by Bill Lackemacher IV

Doolittle. Brown expressed concerns about George W. Bush's efforts to erode the Constitution and the administration's usurpation of Congressional power. Brown stressed as voters, we must continue to support candidates who will effect changes in Congress in order to take back our country and restore the rule of law

Welcomed with a standing ovation, Cindy Sheehan, the co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace, gave a rousing speech. She stressed the need to impeach

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Town & Country Invites You to a Screening of "Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price"

Join Town & Country Democratic Club as it screens the much talked-about film, "Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price" on Wednesday, February 8th at 7:00pm. The meeting will be at the Deterding Park Clubhouse—see the map on page—6.

The film is a feature length documentary that uncovers a retail

giant's assault on families and American values and dives into the deeply personal stories and everyday lives of families and communities struggling to fight a goliath. A working mother is forced to turn to public assistance to provide healthcare for her two small

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From the President...

When the Supreme Court anointed George W. Bush as President In December, 2000, I was highly disappointed. But this wasn't the first time my candidate had lost an election so, as did most Americans, I moved on. I figured one President couldn't do that much damage in four years. I couldn't have been more wrong.

In 2002, I participated in my first anti-war protest. From that point on, I – like many of you – have not rested. Yet, in October of 2004, exhausted but certain that John Kerry would be our next President; I looked forward to getting my country back - along with my life. Wrong again.

The neoconservative Republicans, if nothing else, are relentless in their attacks on everything Democrats hold dear - such things as the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights and democracy in general.

So, none of us have been able to rest – nor should we until we get the United States back on track.

Admittedly, I've been more than a little disappointed in the lack of spine demonstrated by many of our Democratic representatives in Congress. Without Senator Barbara Boxer – who has more guts in her little finger than the majority of her counterparts – and Representatives John Conyers and Dennis Kucinich, I may have given up hope altogether.

Lately, though, I've begun to see some sparks from a few more Democrats. I've been impressed for some time now by Senator Russ Feingold from Wisconsin. Not only did he vote against the Patriot Act and the War Resolution, he was the first Senate Democrat to call for a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq.

But it was Al Gore, the man who actually won the U.S. Presidency in 2000, that brought tears to my eyes and hope to my heart.

In his brilliant speech at Constitution Hall on Martin Luther King Day, he explained, "Our

Founding Fathers were adamant that they had established a government of laws and not men. Indeed, they recognized that the structure of government they had enshrined in our Constitution – our system of checks and balances – was designed with a central purpose of ensuring that it would govern through the rule of law."

He went on to point out that, "An executive who arrogates to himself the power to ignore the legitimate legislative directives of the Congress or to act free of the check of the judiciary becomes the central threat that the Founders sought to nullify in the Constitution – an all powerful executive too reminiscent of the King from whom they had broken free."

Gore's speech included more than 7,000 words, and yet I was riveted

by every one of them. Imagine the guy that too many people (including Democrats) discounted as a boring policy-wonk in 2000 creating such an impact on millions of thinking Americans!

For me personally, Al Gore's words served as that spark I've been craving to inspire me to keep fighting. As Democrats, we all need to keep fighting – fighting to take back Congress, to finally rid Washington D.C. of the stench of corruptness and cronyism, but most of all fighting to take back our country, our American values and our democracy!

We can't afford to be tired. The future of this great democracy is too important. I hope all Town & Country Democrats will stand together and keep up the good fight – for as long as we have to!

Warmer Al Gore finds a new stump

Al Gore, leading man? To borrow a cliché from the Hollywood marketing playbook, the new global warming documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" stars the former vice president as you've never seen him before.

Al Gore wheeling his own suitcase through airports, taking off his shoes and emptying his pockets at security. Al Gore firing up crowds with his one-man PowerPoint presentation show on arctic melt rates, devastating heat waves and dangerous changes in ocean currents.

Al Gore cracking jokes, reflecting candidly on his own foibles.

The failed presidential candidate doesn't immediately come to mind as the kind of charismatic star Hollywood might turn to to dramatize a pet cause. But his quest caught the attention of a group of filmmakers — among them "Pulp Fiction" producer

Lawrence Bender — who have translated it to the screen in a documentary slated to premiere Tuesday at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.



Although the 90-minute documentary might not sell out the multiplexes, the screening has sold out at Sundance and Gore's appearances around the country are drawing throngs. Last week at Vanderbilt University in Gore's hometown of Nashville, 1,100 people filled a large auditorium, with 300 turned away by fire marshals.

The film coincides with Hollywood's renewed interest in Gore as a possible presidential candidate in 2008, as well as a changing cinematic landscape in which documentaries from all sides of the political spectrum are finding audiences and affecting the political conversation.

By Tina Daunt—Times Staff Writer

CDP Recommends Presidential Primary Reform Plan for 2012

In a unanimous vote in its January 28, 2006 Executive Board meeting in Manhattan Beach, CA, the California Democratic Party recommended that the Democratic Party seriously consider the American Plan for implementation in 2012.

The American Plan is designed to solve the problem of "front-loading." Over the past two decades, more and more states have scheduled their primaries increasingly earlier in attempts to capture more political power. This has resulted in shorter, less-competitive nomination races that are more driven by money than by message. In 2004, only 20% of convention delegates had been chosen when Howard Dean suspended his campaign. "That means 80% of Democrats were disenfranchised," said Thomas Gangale, author of the American Plan and executive director of the policy think tank OPS-Alaska,



based in Petaluma, California. "This plan maximizes the involvement of every state and forces candidates to run campaigns responsive to America's great diversity of ideas and needs," said Senator Art Torres (Ret.), Chairman of the California Democratic Party. "It also expands the concept of retail politicking in small venues in the early going, thereby reducing the power of money. Under this plan, grassroots campaigns can go door-to-door in states of diverse populations, score early victories, and build momentum going into later, larger states. At the same time, the plan balances the interests of the large states by giving them the opportunity to be early enough in the calendar to have a meaningful voice in determining the presidential nominee."

For an in-depth explanation of the American Plan, visit <http://www.americanplan.org>.

Country Singer McGraw may run

Country singer Tim McGraw says he wants to run for office someday in his adopted home state of Tennessee — perhaps for governor or U.S. senator — and he's getting encouragement from a fellow Democrat.

"I think he's got it," Bill Clinton says of McGraw in an Esquire magazine story that hits newsstands Monday. "The Democrats need candidates whom people can relate to in a personal way, people who understand their lives and their concerns and share their values. And I think that's something Tim can do without even pretending."

McGraw, 38, told the magazine he has no immediate plans to enter politics.

"Maybe in 10 or 15 years when the music has died down," he said.

He identified health care as his top issue, and said one of his main reasons for wanting to enter politics is Clinton, whom he calls "the best president we ever had."

Mood of Republicans Worry GOP Activists

by Ron Fournier

A growing number of Republican voters are frustrated by congressional spending and scandal, according to GOP leaders from across the country who worry that an "enthusiasm deficit" could cost the party control of Congress in November.

Some rank-and-file Republicans wonder what happened to the party that promised to reform Washington after taking control of Congress in 1994 for the first time in 40 years.

"We've seen the enemy, and he is us," said Tom Rath, a Republican National Committee member from New Hampshire describing the sentiments of some GOP voters. "We have to get back to the basics.

Let's talk about small government and reduced spending, and don't let the Democrats take those issues."

"I hear a lot of concern about increased spending and the need to reduce it — talk about getting back to the basics," said Kate Obenshain Griffin, chairwoman of the Virginia Republican Party.

Griffin, Rath and several other Republican activists attending a two-day RNC meeting said GOP voters in their states still strongly support President Bush. They also insisted in interviews that Republicans were more likely than not to retain control of the House and the Senate in November.

But the possibility of losing Congress doesn't seem as remote as

it once did. Many tried-and-true Republican voters are disenchanted with party leaders in Congress, and the sulky mood could suppress turnout in November, RNC members said.

Separately, private polling for Republicans suggest that government spending and political fallout from the Iraq war are causing anxiety among GOP voters. Senior party officials inside and outside the White House fear that Washington scandal may hurt GOP turnout if average Republican voters believe that Congress' spending habits are partly the result of corruption.

Club News

Meeting Minutes from January 11, 2006

The meeting was called to order to by President Tiffany Brown at 7:15 PM. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were officers Tiffany Brown, Arnie Godmintz, Jim Nakata, Laure Olson.

New President Tiffany Brown stated her vision for the club; to enlist more members and to be more active. She also called upon all members present to introduce themselves. This included new members, old members and also member Charlie Brown, who is running for Congress, and a guest from the Folsom Club.

A speaker, Glenda Marsh, from Peace in the Precincts, talked about that group, its start in Minnesota and their inspiration based on the late Senator Paul Wellstone's political philosophy. She has started a chapter in Sacramento, discussed its 5 principals and its grassroots operation. The group is offering training and lobbying in democratic causes.

A motion was asked for, seconded, motion was passed to accept last month's minutes (MSMP).

The agenda was accepted.

Officer reports: Vice-president Arnie Godmintz reported on the central committee meeting held 1/10/06. Items the committee had discussed dealt with the lack of planning issue, the closure of the headquarters and the pros and cons of supporting candidates vs. supporting policies. It was a lively meeting where different clubs were represented. There was also a call for an alternate for Arnie, to attend those central committee meetings that Arnie cannot attend.

Treasurer Jim Nakata reported \$7316.31 was in the treasury.

Joan Lee, chair of the Legislative committee reported on the \$48 million proposed cut in social services. She spoke of AB1121, a moratorium on the death penalty and for the establishment of a commission on that issue. Also SB840, the single payer universal healthcare bill, and asked for support especially in the light of the Medicare Part D fiasco. She called for more grass roots efforts and discussed members of congress working for relief.

Member reports: The Out of Iraq Town Hall event was reported by Margi Metzler. The event was put on by the After Downing Street group and several peace groups. She reported that hundreds of people were in attendance, including Sean Penn, Charlie Brown, who got a standing ovation, Cindy Sheehan, David Dionise, author of American Hiroshima, Norman Soloman, writer, and Bill Dunstan, moderator, to name a few of the illustrious speakers. Street protests are being scheduled including one this Saturday, 1/14/05 at 16th and Broadway.

Speaker: Charlie Brown talked about his political agenda, acknowledging topics that people are interested in including health, education, clean air and water. He emphasized that he believes in supporting the Constitution, strongly advocates that we must protect it and the Bill of Rights. He spoke of the Republicans selling out to lobbyists. He restated what he wants to do and that is to support the balance between liberty and justice, and asked for our trust. He asked for our support by working on voter registration and walking precincts 365 days a year. Tiffany announced the Steering Committee's decision to request a membership vote for

endorsement and contribution to Charlie's campaign, which, according to the club bylaws, may not be formalized until after the final filing date in March.

New business: John Bernier called for a resolution requesting the California Democratic leadership demand an immediate investigation as to the reasons our government has so callously neglected our troops by failing to properly equip them with body armor. Such an investigation should reach the highest levels of our government, including the Pentagon and the White House. Motion was seconded. Discussion ensued regarding changes to the language, to which senators and representatives, the resolution would be sent. A press release will be sent to the Sacramento Bee and the California Democratic Dialogue.

Arnie explained the importance of the fundraiser awards luncheon, which is usually held in June or July. This is T&C's primary source of income. Our dues barely cover the cost of operation. The funds raised support the Northeast headquarters and other Democratic efforts. Arnie is negotiating for a high profile speaker. There is lots of work to do including, but not limited to, press releases, printing and mailing of letters and invitations, decorating, and "dialing for donor dollars." He urged members to help.

Signup sheets for the various committees were presented – Fundraising, communications, membership, and legislative and Tiffany encouraged members to get more involved by joining committees.

Announcements: Jan Brown announced the Mira Loma High School Young Democrats Club

Continued to the next page

Minutes con't...

fundraiser scheduled for January 25 at 6 pm at Godfather's Pizza at Madison and Dewey in Citrus Heights. Information will be at the T&C website, www.tandconline.org.

Other members announced, "What Would Martin Say?" an event to be held on Sunday, January 15 at 2425 Sierra Blvd (The Unitarian Church). See the website for more information.

On Thursday, January 19, 7-9pm see Congressman Dan Lungren of the 3rd Congressional District speak at 9014 Bruceville Road in Elk Grove.

Ralph Cyfers asked the club to take a position on the Iraq war, and pointed to several bills including HR 635,636, and 637, dealing with congressional investigations of the Iraq war and censure of the President and Vice-President.

And, by the way, check out Time Magazine and see Arnie's picture, with the Governor in paper maché. Go Arnie!

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Laure Olson
Secretary

Concerned Dems Search for Candidates

The Committee to Take Back the 3rd Congressional District is seeking a candidate to run against Congressman Dan Lungren in the California 3rd Congressional District. The 3rd includes most of Sacramento county, part of Solano county, and all of Alpine, Amador and Calaveras counties.

Sacramento County has 80% of the voters in this district. The committee has more than a dozen members and has representatives from the central committees of

Solano and Calaveras counties.

The group has developed a pledge form asking 3rd CD Democrats to pledge \$150 each to support our candidate. He/she will need at least \$300,000 before they can have any hope of getting support from other Democratic organizations.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in running please contact Randy Haynes at 916-536-9485 or 916-956-0680.

2006 Proposed Budget for T&C Democratic Club	
Balance - December, 2005	
	7,498.00
Income	
Dues	2,000.00
Fundraising/Annual Luncheon	13,000.00
Raffles/Donations/Gifts	3,000.00
Miscellaneous	-
Total Income	18,000.00
Expenses	
Newsletter	1,500.00
Voter Registration/Publicity	500.00
Memberships	400.00
Contributions	1,500.00
Northeast HQ	5,000.00
Office & Miscellaneous	1,500.00
Post Office Box	100.00
Fundraising/Annual Luncheon	8,000.00
Total Expense	18,500.00
Projected Year-end Balance	6,998.00

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 _____

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

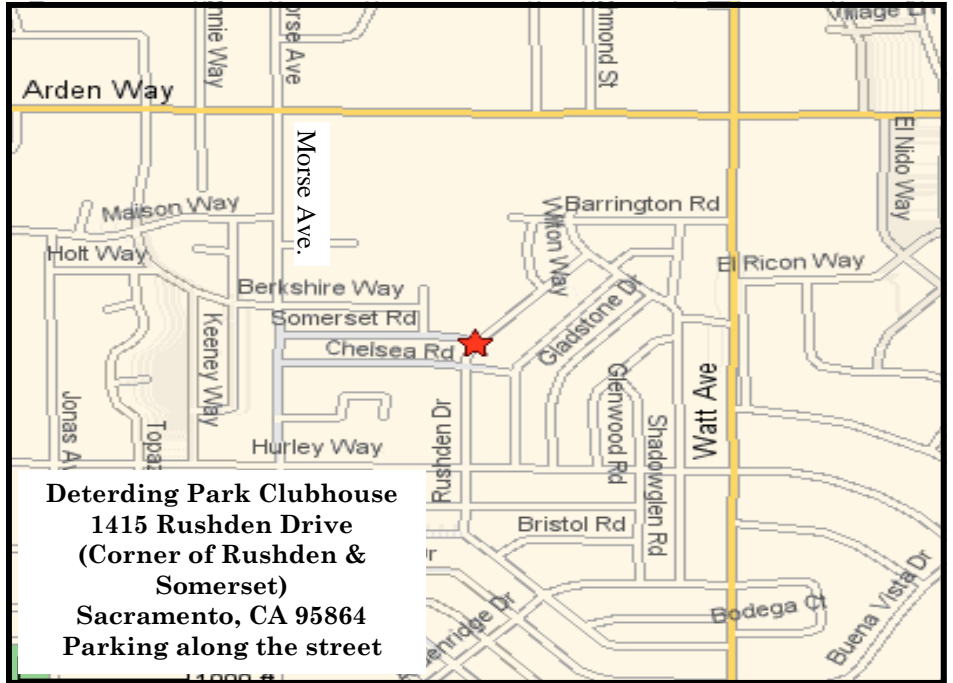
Date _____

“Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price” on Feb. 8th con’t....

children. A Missouri family loses its business after Wal-Mart is given over \$2 million to open its doors down the road. A mayor struggles to equip his first responders after Wal-Mart pulls out and relocates just outside the city limits. A community in California unites, takes on the giant, and wins!

Producer/Director Robert Greenwald and Brave New Films will take us on an extraordinary journey that will change the way you think, feel -- and shop.

Discussion about the film and other club business will follow the screening. Please be sure to mark your calendar and join us for this very informative evening!



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by Joan Lee

Legislation is emerging covering issues Town & Country can really get behind.

* AB 1363 (Dave Jones) the called the Omnibus Conservatorship Reform Act of 2006. This is a measure vital to vulnerable elders and disabled persons from abuse by criminal activity by their conservators. It would improve education and training along with improved oversight by the courts, increased resources for the Public Guardian. A 16-person task force was set up by the California Courts in January to examine the problem, but it fails to include members from the advocacy community. California Chief Justice R. George seems to feel the task-force will lead to reforms. Perhaps we feel it is time to move ahead - we KNOW what the problems are! Legislation may be also necessary. We will undoubtedly be called to help out on this bill, as well as to provide input regarding the task force.



Stand by to help out. *SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE, Sheila Kuehl's SB 840, will continue to wind it's way through the legislature. This year it looks as though Sheila will "go for broke" looking for a signature from the Governor at the end of the day.

*AB 977 (Nava) is a bill to

regulate health plans offered through employers or to the public by insurers whose costs continue to rise. This is the only bill at this point that confronts this "heavy industry". It is high time we regulated their ability to charge excessive deductibles and other out of pocket costs to the consumer. The bill must pass the Assembly by Jan. 31 to survive.



Out of Iraq Forum con't...

this administration as war criminals who continue to lie to the American public about pre-war Iraq intelligence. Cindy reminded the audience that we all need to take responsibility for Iraq—as we elected the officials who ultimately allowed the invasion and occupation.

Actor Sean Penn added to the enthusiasm of the day by stressing that all of the nation's anti-war activism was taking hold and was starting to work—while admitting that the stress of living under the current administration was making it tough for him to quit smoking. Stating that he "was not a pacifist on the inside", he was moved to be one on the outside for the sake of

his children and grandchildren's future. He said we have to fight for everything we have.

A Q & A session followed a brief summary of current pending legislation authored by Bush opponents. The invited speakers deftly fielded questions on the economics of war, the politics of foreign policy, and the power of resistance.

Perhaps the most unforgettable moment occurred when Jesse Dyen, Camp Casey's beloved sound guy and songwriter, played his guitar and sang "Sons and Daughters", the beautiful and plaintive anthem that was born in Crawford during those hot August nights. Before he sang, Jesse asked

the audience which direction southeast was. He explained that when the song was sung every night at Camp Casey, they always faced Bush's ranch. The emotion in his song was reflected and magnified by the packed hall. It was aching and palpable.

The program was moderated by Bill Durston, President of the Sacramento Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility. Bill wrapped up the meeting by telling the audience ideas for how they can get involved in resisting the war. He encouraged everyone to take part in the National Call In Day for January 9th. We can't imagine anyone in attendance wasn't motivated to keep the energy going!

Editorial: Internet Dragnet

The U.S. Justice Department has launched a huge fishing expedition of people's search habits on the Internet.

The Justice Department is demanding a random sample of 1 million Web addresses and records of all Google searches from any one-week period.

Google is fighting the request, as it should. The Internet search engine giant said in an Oct. 10 letter that the Justice Department's request is "overbroad, unduly burdensome, vague and intended to harass." Unfortunately, Microsoft, Yahoo and AOL have chosen to comply rather than fight.

The Justice Department says its aim is to find out whether filtering software actually protects minors from commercial pornography on the Internet. But if that is the real aim, why can't the Justice Department just sit a few people down at computers to do some actual searches and test filtering programs to evaluate their effectiveness?

The Justice Department says getting access to the databases of

Google and other search engines "will assist the government" in getting a "sample of the overall universe of search engine queries" and "help us understand what sites users can find using search engines."

Now, why is that any business of the government? You don't need to see the search habits of the entire universe of users and Web sites to find porn sites.

You don't see the Justice Department issuing subpoenas to every national chain store that sells adult magazines or rents adult movies, to find out the habits of all users in the hopes of gleaning insights on access for minors. There's a reason for that. Under our system of law, such things usually require that the government has reason to believe that a crime has been committed and that a legitimate criminal investigation is under way.

In this case, the Justice Department wants information not for a criminal investigation, but simply as background for a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of

From the Sacramento Bee

the Child Online Protection Act of 1998. That law was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as too broad, preventing adults from accessing legal sites. The case was returned to the lower courts.

Google and the other search engines are not even parties in that case. But the Justice Department believes Google's data would be of "assistance to the government's preparation of its defense."

Well, sure. You can imagine all sorts of instances in which information from businesses or individuals might be "helpful" to the government. But being "helpful" isn't the standard under the Constitution, which doesn't allow "unreasonable searches and seizures."

That means government doesn't have free rein to engage in fishing expeditions in the hopes of finding something "helpful." The Justice Department doesn't need to know the search habits of all Web users to figure out the effectiveness of anti-pornography filtering software. This looks like harassment, and the courts should stop it.

Contribution: I Will Not Support Hillary

by Molly Ivins

I'd like to make it clear to the people who run the Democratic Party that I will not support Hillary Clinton for president.

Enough. Enough triangulation, calculation and equivocation. Enough clever straddling, enough not offending anyone. This is not a Dick Morris election. Sen. Clinton is apparently incapable of taking a clear stand on the war in Iraq, and that alone is enough to disqualify her. Her failure to speak out on Terri Schiavo, not to mention that gross pandering on flag-burning, are just contemptible little dodges.

The recent death of Gene McCarthy reminded me of a lesson I spent a long, long time unlearning, so now I have to re-learn it. It's about political courage and heroes, and when a country is desperate for leadership. There are times when regular politics will not do, and this is one of those times. There are times a country is so tired of bull that only the truth can provide relief.

If no one in conventional-wisdom politics has the courage to speak up and say what needs to be said, then you go out and find some obscure junior senator from Minnesota with the guts to do it. In 1968, Gene McCarthy was the little boy who said out loud, "Look, the emperor isn't wearing any clothes." Bobby Kennedy -- rough, tough Bobby Kennedy -- didn't do it. Just this quiet man trained by Benedictines who liked to quote poetry.

What kind of courage does it take, for mercy's sake? The majority of the American people (55 percent) think the war in Iraq is a mistake and that we should get out. The majority (65 percent) of the American people want single-payer health care and are willing to pay more taxes to get it. The majority (86 percent) of the American people favor raising the minimum wage. The majority of

the American people (60 percent) favor repealing Bush's tax cuts, or at least those that go only to the rich. The majority (66 percent) wants to reduce the deficit not by cutting domestic spending, but by reducing Pentagon spending or raising taxes.

The majority (77 percent) thinks we should do "whatever it takes" to

"You sit there in Washington so frightened of the big, bad Republican machine you have no idea what people are thinking."

protect the environment. The majority (87 percent) thinks big oil companies are gouging consumers and would support a windfall profits tax. That is the center, you fools. WHO ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

I listen to people like Rahm Emanuel superciliously explaining elementary politics to us clueless naives outside the Beltway ("First, you have to win elections"). Can't you even read the damn polls?

Here's a prize example by someone named Barry Casselman, who writes, "There is an invisible civil war in the Democratic Party, and it is between those who are attempting to satisfy the defeatist and pacifist left base of the party and those who are attempting to prepare the party for successful elections in 2006 and 2008."

This supposedly pits Howard Dean, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, emboldened by "a string of bad news from the Middle East ... into calling for premature retreat from Iraq," versus those pragmatic folk like Steny Hoyer, Rahm Emmanuel, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Joe Lieberman.

Oh come on, people -- get a grip on the concept of leadership. Look at

this war -- from the lies that led us into it, to the lies they continue to dump on us daily.

You sit there in Washington so frightened of the big, bad Republican machine you have no idea what people are thinking. I'm telling you right now, Tom DeLay is going to lose in his district. If Democrats in Washington haven't got enough sense to OWN the issue of political reform, I give up on them entirely.

Do it all, go long, go for public campaign financing for Congress. I'm serious as a stroke about this -- that is the only reform that will work, and you know it, as well as everyone else who's ever studied this. Do all the goo-goo stuff everybody has made fun of all these years: embrace redistricting reform, electoral reform, House rules changes, the whole package. Put up, or shut up. Own this issue, or let Jack Abramoff politics continue to run your town.

Bush, Cheney and Co. will continue to play the patriotic bully card just as long as you let them. I've said it before: War brings out the patriotic bullies. In World War I, they went around kicking dachshunds on the grounds that dachshunds were "German dogs." They did not, however, go around kicking German shepherds. The MINUTE someone impugns your patriotism for opposing this war, turn on them like a snarling dog and explain what loving your country really means. That, or you could just piss on them elegantly, as Rep. John Murtha did. Or eviscerate them with wit (look up Mark Twain on the war in the Philippines). Or point out the latest in the endless "string of bad news."

Do not sit there cowering and pretending the only way to win is as Republican-lite. If the Washington-based party can't get up and fight, we'll find someone who can.

The Final Word: Weighty Matters

by Garrison Keillor

Everything was said that could be said about Ariel Sharon as he lay in a coma except the one thing that crossed the mind of every viewer watching newsreel footage of the prime minister, which was, "How much does that man weigh?" (Answer: 255 pounds. And he's 5-foot-7.) He looked like a bull walrus ruling a colony of baby seals. And it made you wonder, how does tiny Israel come up with this family-size guy while the World's Only Superpower struggles along with a wiry little fellow who works very hard on his abs? Is it time we think about getting someone weightier?

We haven't had a fat president since William Howard Taft and that was at the tail end of the Gilded Age, when politicians were expected to be portly. We've had a few semi-beefy ones since (Harding, Hoover), and LBJ carried a potbelly, and Bill Clinton had his moments of bloat, but the American people, now that two-thirds of us are overweight, prefer that the Great White Father be lean, taut, angular, a runner or horseman or cutter of brush. Whereas a guy who looks like he'd be right at home in a Barcalounger with a can of Pabst in his mitt doesn't seem to fit the bill.

I suppose that a compact build indicates some sort of self-discipline, but discipline to do what? Look at Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot. None of them was a hearty eater, and for good reason: paranoia. When you're a megalomaniac, it takes away your appetite, thinking of all the folks who'd love to put rat poison in your ratatouille.

It is human to put butter on mashed potatoes and to choose the cheese plate instead of the lo-fat gelatin and to linger over the port wine and chocolates. The man who denies himself might satisfy his hungers elsewhere, promulgating

reckless policies, such as a war against a nation that poses no threat to us and torturing those whom he deems enemies and detaining them at his pleasure and marching his troops into a quagmire. A fat man, someone who must heave himself to his feet in the morning and behold a great pile of flesh in the bathroom mirror, the matronly pectorals and the enormous haunches and spare

"Fat men spend more time in contemplation, if only because they get winded climbing stairs and need to sit down. Because they jiggle when they walk, they may be less prone to delusions of grandeur."

tire, might be more circumspect. He already looks like an emperor, so he would try harder not to act like one.

The advance eulogies of Sharon spoke of his remarkable political shift, from right-wing warrior to moderate compromiser, and you thought, "This is the sort of man America needs right now. Maybe we've been looking at the wrong body type."

Fat men spend more time in contemplation, if only because they get winded climbing stairs and need to sit down. Because they jiggle when they walk, they may be less prone to delusions of grandeur. The fat man doesn't expect his supporters to hoist him to their shoulders. Nor does he hope to sneak around undetected. He is able to face up to his own mistakes. (How can he not? They are hanging over his belt.) He has lived with derision and that gives him a sense of compassion that may be lacking in a Medium or Small. And yet like Churchill, he knows what it's like to rouse oneself to heroic effort. Neville Chamberlain was the elegant

guy in the 36 Extra Long who kept backing down from the Nazis. It was the Old Fat Man who spoke of blood, sweat and tears. He knew about sweat.

The top-ranking fat man in government today is Speaker of the House J. Dennis ("Coach") Hastert of Plano, Ill., who for years has been two heartbeats away from the presidency, and one of those hearts has a pacemaker. A mild-mannered fellow who only seeks to do good for the western suburbs of Chicago and for American business, Hastert favors a strong national defense and the education of our children while opposing tax increases of any kind, large or small. He is also in favor of life.

Sitting on the dais behind President Bush at the annual State of the Union address, the speaker has never missed a single standing ovation. A fat man must get tired of jumping to his feet 20 times in a row, but the speaker has always been there, clapping his big meaty hands. He would be the first Dennis to become president. And he would look more like us, the American people.

Think it over.

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 Calendar



Town & Country Democratic Club

Wednesday, February 8th, 7:00pm
Deterding Park Clubhouse
1415 Rushden Way, Sacramento
Corner of Rushden/Somerset
Contact: Tiffany Brown, President
(916) 419-4064
www.tandconline.org

SACOG Public Forum - Getting from Here To There - Does the Bus Take You Where You Need to Go?

Sat., Feb. 11th, 10am - 12pm &
Wed., Feb. 15th, 5:30pm - 7:30pm
Regional Transit Board Room
1400 29th Street, Sacramento
Contact: Barbara Bechtold
(916) 321-6226 or
bbechtold@sacog.org

5th AD Democratic Committee

Monday, February 13th, 7:00pm
Contact: Ann Wangberg
(916) 966-3590

Stonewall Democratic Club

Second Monday, 6:30 pm
Lambda Players Theater
2427 17th Street, Sacramento
Contact: (916) 441-1787
www.sacstonewall.org

Gray Panthers

Tuesday, February 14th, 1:00pm
Hart Senior Center
27th & I Streets, Sacramento
Contact: Joan Lee
(916) 332-5980
www.graypanthersacramento.org

Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee

Tuesday, February 14th, 6:00pm
State Capitol Room 127
Contact: Rick Wathen, Chairman
(916) 442-0264
www.sacdems.org

Women Democrats of Sacramento County

Monday, February 20th, 6:30pm
Sacramento Teachers Association
5300 Elvas Avenue, Sacramento
Contact: Linda Rogaski
(916) 332-8732
www.wdsc.net

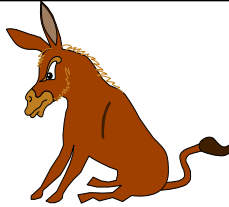
Town & Country Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 22, 7:00pm
Location: TBA
Contact: Tiffany (916) 419-4064
All Members Welcome!
www.tandconline.org

Sacramento For Democracy

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

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



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