

Hayward DEMOS

★★★★ DEMOCRATIC CLUB ★★★★★

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

WWW.HAYWARDDEMOS.ORG ★ PO Box 56783 ★ HAYWARD, CA 94545 ★ 510-581-5169

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS UP!

www.haywarddemos.org



END NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW! by Jim Forsyth de Brandon-Pérez



On August 6, 1945, the first A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people died agonizing deaths. Each year, people have gathered in front of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (89% of its funding goes to research and development of nuclear weapons) to mark the (66th) anniversary and renew a commitment to abolish nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

Demos members have always participated in these events. This year was no different, with five Demos members in attendance.

The US is planning to increase the budget for designing and building its nuclear arsenal and means of delivery, including a new long-range bomber and nuclear-fitted drones. It will amount to a 20% increase on 2010 spending for new weapons. While the non-proliferation agreement means that these new weapons will replace existing weapons, we are not moving any closer to eliminating this weapons technology. On the other hand, the U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously called for the US to begin negotiations with other nuclear powers to abolish nuclear weapons entirely.

The Fukushima nuclear plant disaster is also leading to international efforts to stop building nuclear power plants and phase out current ones, and instead rely on renewable energy sources. This August 6th, in front of the gates of the lab, participants heard from a Hiroshima survivor through a computer linkup with Japan. He spoke about his horrific experience as a 16 year old boy, and told us that the Japanese are trying to get their government to get out of nuclear production completely, as the Germans have promised to do. He asked for our support in putting pressure on Japan to accomplish this.

Here is what you can do: Write, call or email your Congressional representative. Tell them that the proposed increase in spending for nuclear weapons is unacceptable. The US must immediately convene a conference of all nuclear-weapons states to negotiate a swift, internationally enforced phase-out of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their complete abolition by 2020. The US should cut spending on nuclear research and development, and devote the funds to clearing up the Superfund hazardous waste sites, including the one at the Livermore Lab. Let us dismantle nuclear weapons, so that no other human being has to endure what the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki still endure. More information: www.trivalleycares.org There is also information and a slideshow of the Easter action at www.epicalc.org/GF2011Slideshow/



HALLELUJAH! CALIFORNIA'S BUDGET PROBLEMS ARE FINALLY SOLVED

What's all the fuss about? During a recent visit to the state capital, the Forsyth/Brandon-Pérez twins we were lucky enough to hear that Joel Anderson, a hitherto unknown and undistinguished state Senator from El Cajón, has solved the budget crisis! His solution? Voilá! He wants everyone in California to send money, "... a personal check, cashier's check or money order...", to the Dept. of Finance. According to his press release, this will "...solve the state's budget problems." Of course, if pigs had wings...

See you at the

FALL FESTIVAL:

Sunday, September 11, 3 to 7 P.M. at the home of former Supervisor Gail Steele, 22586 Arlette Avenue, Hayward.

2011 CLUB BOARD

President - Mary Anne Reno
Vice Pres.-Helena Straughter
Treasurer - Tim Forsyth
Secretary: Pheleta Santos
Membership Director and Web Editor -Silvia Brandon Pérez
Programs - Harry Scott
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THE CASTLEWOOD 24 by Silvia Brandon Pérez de Forsyth

On June 23rd, Castlewood Country Club held its four-day Men's Invitational Golf Tournament, one of their biggest annual events. You may remember that Castlewood locked out their workers more than 16 months ago over the share they were to pay for health coverage. The oldest worker was in her eighties and had worked for the country club in Pleasanton for a quarter of a century. Some of the workers in fact spoke at our July labor panel and the Demos have donated money to their worker relief fund on several occasions.



Almost daily protests have had no result, so this time leaders of the Unite Here Hospitality Workers Union Local 2850, which covers about 60 of the club's cooks, servers, dishwashers and other hospitality workers, decided to take it up a notch. That Thursday very early in the morning, over 150 demonstrators, including union members, some of the locked-out workers with family and friends, religious groups and members of other unions gathered, with signs and horns, and then 24 of us sat and blocked Castlewood Drive, preventing the golf carts from getting to the sacrosanct games. The frustrated golfers attempted to move a boulder to get around the blockade and our group promptly moved to block them. Soon officers from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, the California Highway Patrol and the Pleasanton Police Department came to watch the activities, while a police helicopter flew overhead.

At about 11 AM officers announced the assembly was illegal and began arresting those in the street while a dozen other officers in riot gear watched. Most of us were guests of the Santa Rita jail from 12 to 20 hours. It was a peaceful demonstration except for the golfers, some of whom became quite violent.

In a nation whose ruling god is Mammon (material wealth), a good golf game is far more important than loyalty to long-time workers. Castlewood is our Wisconsin, and we must support these workers. For more information visit <http://endthelockoutnow.org>.



A GIANT PONZI SCHEME – Review of “Inside Job”

by Jim Forsyth de B.P.

Mark Twain said that it is hard to convince a man of something if his livelihood depends on his not being convinced of it. Greed, perverse incentives, deregulation, inflationary bubbles, gambling with other people's money -- these threads run through any account of how we arrived at our present financial impasse. “Inside Job,” a film which pulls no punches and names names, tellingly nails the duplicity of financial industry spokespeople (the few willing to be interviewed). The film was shown at our July meeting and is available to members. It skewers the “banksters,” but it also features banking experts who are on our side.

The film shows President Obama denouncing Wall Street greed, and then goes on to show that the very same cast of characters who caused the crisis are still minding the store, and, moreover, continue to pursue policies which benefit the big banks rather than “the other 98%.”

According to Robert Gnaizda of the Greenlining Institute, criminal conspiracy could be proven in court against many of these men. To date, of course, there have been no prosecutions, nor even attempts to recover the billions of dollars of public money and pension funds that they have stolen. As a member of Congress pointed out to a group of CEOs in a Committee Hearing, “I have constituents who robbed your banks, and they say ‘we’re sorry, it won’t happen again,’ the same as you’re saying.” *Continued on page 3.*

DEMO EVENTS

If you have events to list on the club calendar, please send them to MaryAnne Reno at mareno1@hotmail.com

ALAMEDA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

First Wednesday of each month at the San Leandro Library, 7PM, www.acdems.org

PEACE AND PIZZA

Speakers, movies, and discussions, held the 2nd Friday of every month, 7PM 1533 B Street, Hayward,

GREATER HAYWARD DEMOCRATIC CLUB

3rd Wednesday of each month, 7PM. Firefighters Union Hall, 22734 Main St. Hayward, 94541.

CASTRO VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Meetings on the 4th Tuesday on every month, 7 PM. Faith Lutheran Church 20080 Redwood Rd. Graydon Room.

TRI VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

- For the latest info, Visit www.trivalleydems.com

A GIANT PONZI SCHEME (con't)

Bailing out the financial industry has not and will not create jobs. Cutting taxes on the rich and corporations and increasing them on everyone else and "balancing the budget" on the backs of working people make the problem worse. Unless we learn the lessons that Mark Twain understood and that apparently have to be relearned in every generation, our children face a future we don't want to contemplate.



THE VIEW FROM HERE, by our man in Wisconsin, Jesse Kehres

The political scene in Wisconsin has been hectic for the last six months or so, to say the least. With thousands of protesters of the past elections jamming the capitol, normal business activity took a hit with the possible exception of the fast food vendors who found a bonanza. I was a bit ambivalent regarding the protests; "We were stupid enough to vote for Walker and his cronies, so live with it." However, the future of Wisconsin is at stake and one is compelled to enter the fray. In the recall elections of 7 Republican senators, 6 of the Democratic contenders are women. This is fine with me as I have favored women with my support for years. I just have not seen such a preponderance of women candidates before. Hopefully the Republicans will find women are like bees. If you get them aroused, you'll likely get stung. (The recall election is August 9.)



THE FARCE IS OVER: the Obama Administration allows expansion of Secure Communities, by Silvia B.P. de Forsyth

On August 5th, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it is unilaterally annulling the agreements between states and Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) "Secure Communities" program, arguing that participation in the program is **mandatory**. This will in effect force all local law enforcement agencies in the United States to participate in the controversial immigration enforcement program and will nullify all existing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) previously signed by state governments. Under Secure Communities, local law enforcement agencies must submit fingerprints of anyone arrested to a federal immigration database. DHS statistics show that most people identified and deported under the program have no criminal history or only minor offenses such as traffic violations.

A number of immigrant justice programs have condemned the Obama administration's ongoing strong-arm tactics to force local law enforcement to assume the duties of federal immigration officers. Calling it a Draconian step that will undermine crime prevention and further marginalize groups already at risk, Amnesty International joins a number of advocacy groups in decrying the announcement. In doing so, states Amnesty, DHS ignores the advice of numerous state and local governments and continues its cruel attack on undocumented immigrants.

Secure Communities was originally referred to as voluntary, with DHS listing instructions for states and local communities to "opt out." It was sold to states in its inception as a program to rid the country of criminal immigrants, but practice has shown it to be counterproductive and to be enforced along lines of racial profiling, frequently followed by coercive practices in which people sign away their rights and "agree" to deportation without an understanding of the process. Routine traffic stops frequently lead to deportation shortly thereafter. Holding facilities and jails such as the West County Detention Center in Richmond are used to house immigrants with no more criminal behavior than a crack in their windshield, making a wrong turn and similar 'crimes.' Immigrant communities are afraid to report crimes for fear of deportation. Women have reported domestic violence, only to be arrested and deported themselves.

"Today's announcement confirms [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]'s status as a rogue agency," Pablo Alvarado, director of the National Day Laborer's Organizing Network and a vocal critic of Secure Communities, said in a statement. "The recent actions constitute a crisis not only for our civil rights but our democracy as a whole. Governments cannot rule by decree."

Democratic Party Executive Board Meeting July 29-31 – 2011 - Sheraton Park Hotel in Anaheim, CA

Helena Straughter attended the Democratic Executive Board Meeting July 29-31 2011 as a member of the finance committee. There was a discussion about delegates not attending conventions and failing to pay dues, which is their responsibility. An item brought to the floor was that if no Democrat advances to the top-two (scenario 1) there is concern that the State Party would not be able to act in such a race even if it appeared that a “Decline-to-State” candidate in the top-two might help advance Democratic principles and efforts. An example given was Bernie Sanders, who caucuses with the Democrats while being registered as “Decline-to-State,” might face a staunch Republican. The State Party would be able to support such a candidate if local DSCC members wished to do so. This issue was voted against; some members stepped up to the microphone and said we should not belittle ourselves. We should have more confidence in our Democratic party.

Another workshop was Communication Networks, by Tenoch Flores, ways we can get our message out without relying on the media, and how to build an infrastructure. Some of the principles discussed to strengthen our communications network include the size of the state and the inability to achieve full message penetration; the fact that what plays in San Francisco, Sacramento and Los Angeles may not play in San Bernardino, Shasta or Del Norte, and the fact that the decrease in balanced news outlets and distribution channels has left a void – and a unique opportunity. We must therefore 1) learn to do one thing well, rather than doing fifteen things and not completing the one project; 2) Build on existing structures and avoid reinventing the wheel when possible; 3) Optimize Face Book – if there is something that always exists, build on that and 4) Build connections – don’t build islands. Tools of the trade include newsletters, emails, Facebook, listserves, websites, and Twitter.

Helena also attended the Affirmative Action Committee of Delegate Selection. She talked about her delegate meet and greet event on August 13. Two of the committee members who are part of the California Democratic Party volunteered to help out.

At the African American Caucus six members were appointed as regional directors and Helena was appointed as the Regional Director for Alameda County.

In the picture below, our own Pheleta Santos and Helena Straughter at a luncheon given by senator Ellen Corbett earlier this year.



DEM 2012

Hilary Crosby, Controller of the California Democratic Party, had actors from Hollywood do role play of the ASK to join Dem2012. It was a way to have a great laugh before the general assembly. They role-played a good and a not so good way to ask people to sign-up.



Demos wedding! (Pictures only, including members of your executive board, thank you!



THE REALITY OF STATISTICS & THE SOUTH HAYWARD PARISH by Betty DeForest

I am not a numbers person. Statistics don't do it for me. Just tell me the story, never mind all that abstract stuff about percentages, trends, forecasts, and how many people are doing what. But then once in a while the numbers ARE the story. They bring the story into perspective with a disturbing clarity that can't be ignored. The Federal Poverty Guideline income for a family of two adults and one infant is \$17,170 annually. Anything above that amount means that you are low-income but not considered at "poverty level" and therefore not eligible for many government services.

The United Way of the Bay Area produces a report each year, The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures the actual cost of living by household size in each of the seven bay area counties. The report considers the cost of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, taxes, and miscellaneous expenses (a pair of shoes or maybe diapers for that baby?) county by county. To be self sufficient in Alameda County our little family of three must have an income that equals \$50,084 a year or, to put it another way, each adult must make a minimum of \$11.86 an hour in a 40 hour a week job. If those jobs pay California minimum wage, then our working adults will need to have more than three 40 hour jobs in order to achieve self-sufficiency. The United Way looked at expenses adjusted by household size and found that 90,863 Alameda County households are below self-sufficiency standards; of those, 80.6% have one or more workers, only 6.3% receive Public Assistance and only 11.8% receive food stamps. (So much for all those "lazy folk retired on the Public Dole") Fifty-five percent of those households are single women with children.

Behind all those statistics in the newspaper regarding budget cuts, service reductions, lay-offs, forced furlough days and business closures are people; people with children to feed, rent to pay, health issues to address, choices to make. Each month 90,863 households in Alameda County are forced to make choices such as: "Pasta and oatmeal are lots cheaper than oranges or vegetables and the kids will feel full longer." "Can I make these work boots last one more month? Maria needs that warm jacket for school." "If I buy my medication, I won't be able to pay the room rent, maybe if I just take a half dose I can make it last until next month."

Now here is the real story in our corner of the world: statistics can be dismissed and forgotten; people are a different matter. In the month of July 1,820 of those people, all Hayward residents, received food from the South Hayward Parish Food Pantry, nearly twice as many as in June. The demand grows each month. Can you help? Your \$20 gift buys a case of milk. Soon we will have a sustainer program. Visit southhaywardparish.org or call 510/785-3663



THE AUDACITY OF HOPE by Henry Norr

I was among the passengers on The Audacity of Hope, the U.S.-flagged boat that tried to sail to Gaza earlier this summer as part of the Freedom Flotilla II. As you've probably heard, we never got anywhere near our intended destination: the Greek Coast Guard, backed by a boatload of heavily armed commandos, blocked our way when we were only a few miles out of the port near Athens where we started, then impounded our boat and arrested our captain. Of the nine other vessels expected to participate in the international convoy, most were also blocked in port by the Greek authorities, while two were incapacitated by sabotage. Only one, a small yacht that had sailed from France, was able to approach Gaza, but while still in international waters it was boarded and seized by Israeli forces.



Despite all these frustrations, I - and, I'm sure, just about all of the 300+ people from 22 countries who took part in the flotilla - think that the project was well worth the time, money, and effort we invested in it. After all, we had never actually expected to get to Gaza: in light of Israel's murderous attack on the Mavi Marmara and the other vessels in the 2010 Gaza Freedom Flotilla, and the steady stream of threats from Israeli officials over the last year, we knew we'd be stopped. That happened sooner and in a different way than we'd anticipated, thanks to Israel's success in outsourcing the blockade to Greece. But from the outset the whole endeavor was really a *demonstration*, designed to call public attention to the harsh collective punishment Israel - with funding and support from the Obama administration - continues to impose on the 1.6 million people of Gaza.

(Continued on Page 8)

Demos Democratic Club of Hayward

... "A Legacy of Progressive Education & Leadership," founded 1967

39th Annual Fall Festival



BRING BACK ELEANOR'S SPIRIT; THROW THE TEA PARTY OVERBOARD!

WHERE: The home of former Supervisor GAIL STEELE
22586 Arlette Avenue, Hayward (2 blocks West of B & Center Streets)

WHEN: SUNDAY, September 11, 2011, 3:00 to 7:00 PM

MEET YOUR LOCAL LEGISLATORS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS
Come listen to *BRIGID O'FARRELL*, author of a book about Eleanor Roosevelt and the American worker: "SHE WAS ONE OF US."

DINNER * * * AUCTION * * * RAFFLE
Dinner by Chefs Robb Crowder & Mary Anne Reno
PLEASE BRING A SALAD OR DESSERT!
For Information call (510) 581-5169 or (510) 712-5909

----- CUT HERE AND RETURN THE PORTION BELOW -----

DONATION: _____ \$15 / Person (\$20 at the door)
(Includes Dinner) _____ \$25 Family Maximum (\$35 at the door)
_____ \$100 Patron – Table of Five
_____ \$200 Sponsor – Table of Ten

I / We cannot attend, but would like to contribute \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Hayward Demos Democratic Club

Name: _____

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This information is required by law when making a political contribution. Proceeds will be divided 80% to the Demos general fund and 20% to the Demos PAC – FPPC #880108. Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. Contributions will be used in connection with federal elections and are subject to federal prohibitions and limitations. Union, corporate and PAC contributions are permitted in any amount under state law and will be used in connection with non-federal elections. Contributions to the Hayward Demos Democratic Club are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Paid for by the Hayward Demos Democratic Club, P.O. Box 56783, Hayward, CA 94545 – FPPC #880108

From Tahrir to Main Street Lessons of the Egyptian Revolution for Americans

By Sharat G. Lin

For 59 years, the Egyptian people lived under a government that promised democracy and held elections for the president and People's Assembly. But under a succession of military leaders in civilian clothes, the ideals of the Revolution of 1952, democratic rights, the integrity of elections, and socio-economic rights became severely eroded.

In the face of the Emergency Law of 1981, Egyptian people from all walks of life, including the military, moved into the streets on January 25, 2011 to show that they were fed up with dictatorship, the police state, corruption, the failed education system, and deteriorating economic conditions. Each day more and more people shed their fears as the crowds in Cairo's Tahrir Square, and in city plazas across the country, demanded that President Hosni Mubarak leave. The demand for regime change turned into a raging demand for regime overthrow.

While the Obama Administration praised the Mubarak government for its "restraint" and called it "stable," Egyptian police unleashed a wave of terror against the protesters that killed 850 civilians in 4 days. Such was the magnitude of the violence that the Egyptian Armed Forces, the real power behind the civilian government, forced the withdrawal of all police and internal security forces from the streets throughout the country of 83 million people.

In the next fourteen days, hundreds of thousands of protesters surged through Tahrir Square every Tuesday and Friday. On the days in between, Tahrir Square was occupied by tens of thousands of people chanting, marching, sharing food, bringing medicines to care for the injured, and sweeping the pavement of all trash. Every night encampments and crowds kept thousands of people in the Square at all times. Their universal demand was for President Mubarak to resign, without which they would neither leave the Square nor end the protests.

The people of Wisconsin learned from Tahrir to occupy the State Capitol in Madison until their demand to uphold the right of collective bargaining was upheld. Now they have turned to a campaign to recall the governor and state legislators who acted to cancel their basic rights. But the lesson of Tahrir is not recall, but the resounding demand for resignation, the demand for rewriting the constitution to change the system itself. Entrenched elected officials in the U.S. who were voted in more by money than by votes must face the people in between elections. If they have failed the people, the people should camp out surrounding their offices until they resign in shame. This is what should have been done to President George Bush, Governor Scott Walker, and even to President Barack Obama for starting more wars, deporting more immigrants, and enabling the transfer of more wealth to the rich than any of his predecessors.

Like the Egyptians of Tahrir who broke the dictatorship of the ruling party, Americans need to break the two-party dictatorship that in collaboration with the mass media systematically excludes third party candidates from public debates, equal time, and media coverage. Americans need to start a mass movement for real democracy here at home.



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NEXT MEETING:

Sunday, September 11, 3 - 7 P.M. "The Fall Festival."

INTERFAITH VIGIL TO SUPPORT IMPRISONED IMMIGRANTS

Interfaith vigils to support and accompany immigrants imprisoned at the West County Detention Facility in Richmond (Contra Costa) are being held on the third Wednesday of every month at 5:30 PM. Organized by the East Bay Interfaith Immigration Coalition, these vigils are deeply moving and meaningful, educating all, while providing an opportunity for prayer and witness. Congregations from Richmond, Pinole and Contra Costa County, Demos members and many others attend the monthly vigils; the July vigil had over 100 participants and representatives from KPFA, Channel 2 news and a local Bay area outlet.



THE AUDACITY OF HOPE (Continued from page 4)

From that point of view, the flotilla was a stunning success: we got much more media attention than we'd even dreamed of. (Punch "Gaza flotilla 2011" into Google and you get more than 1 million hits!) Even mainstream outlets that rarely give grassroots activists a fair shake - including the New York Times, CNN, NPR, the AP, and Reuters - delivered extensive and, for the most part, surprisingly fair, often even sympathetic coverage. Local radio and TV outlets that have rarely if ever allowed advocates for Palestine on their airwaves before carried interviews with passengers, and dozens of newspapers - including the Oakland Tribune and its siblings - ran op-eds we wrote to explain our case.

Obviously, no PR stunt, however effective on its own terms, by itself changes the grim realities the Palestinians face on the ground. If they're ever to get justice, it will require much more concrete pressure on the Israeli government - from the growing grassroots Palestinian non-violent resistance movement, from international supporters exerting economic pressure, and maybe someday from the U.S. and European governments, if our politicians will ever stop groveling before the Israelis and the Israel-right-or-wrong lobby at home. But initiatives like the flotilla and the "flytilla" that followed (a campaign by hundreds of activists to enter Israel by air with the announced intention of visiting the West Bank) at least help to keep the question of Palestine on the international agenda. At a time when the Israelis - now joined by President Obama, unfortunately - would like nothing better than to sweep the whole issue under the rug, that's something I'm proud to have been part of.