



**YosemiteDems.net**

**The Mountain Democrat  
Newsletter Editor  
PO Box 760  
Oakhurst, CA 93644**



# **The Mountain Democrat**

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## **February March 2013**

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Oakhurst Democratic Club and the Mariposa Democratic Club, and is distributed to all current members of those clubs. For a membership application see the inside back cover of this newsletter.

### COMING EVENTS

#### February 2013

Feb 2: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
**Sweetwater Steakhouse**  
\*NOTE NEW LOCATION\*

Feb 9: Mariposa Club Meeting

#### March 2013

Mar 2: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
**Sweetwater Steakhouse**  
\*NOTE NEW LOCATION\*

Mar 9: Mariposa Club Meeting

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For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web pages at:

[YosemiteDems.net](http://YosemiteDems.net) or [MariposaDemocraticClub.org](http://MariposaDemocraticClub.org)

**PLEASE RENEW  
FINAL ISSUE**

**If this label is on the cover of your newsletter  
it means that our records indicate your 2013 club  
dues have not been paid.**

It's the beginning of the year, and time to renew your Mariposa Democratic Club membership! Please fill out the form below and send it with a check to:

**Mariposa Democratic Club**  
PO Box 5008-268  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING** \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL** \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Dues are \$10 per person and \$15 per family, but please consider donating extra to help us do more!

## If Liberals Thought Like Conservatives

By Les Marsden

Black, theoretically, is the absence of light, and white contains all the wavelengths of light.

But when's the last time you saw such two extremes in the real world? And perhaps, more relevantly, is that all there is?

At the risk of sounding like a mere categorizer myself, my experience has shown that many conservatives only operate in their own worlds of black and white. They interpret simply. They spend no time considering all the nuances of gray (and other colors) that really do affect the outcome of any hypothesis and whatever DOESN'T support their pre-determined mindset is simply ignored or eliminated. And so it's sometimes tough to comprehend the logic (if any) behind their arguments. Take gun control: the NRA and many of its most hardcore adherents know what they know, and that's all they want to know. They KNOW the Constitution's second amendment gives them unlimited rights as Amur'cans to own whatever the hell guns they want, and they don't want the truth to get in their way.

But what if WE quiet, reflective liberals operated the same way? If we played by the simple, reactionary rules of the conservatives? If WE took their own rhetoric and axiomatic philosophy down to the very basic level of black and white, with no shades of pesky gray to confound our results?

"Guns don't kill people; PEOPLE kill people." Okay, you're right. So let's ban PEOPLE. If we get rid of all people, no one can kill anymore. And as a person, I'd like to make sure I'm safe from people.

"The insane have to be locked up. They're the real problem." Okay! I agree 100%. And because, seriously, only a crazy person would WANT to own assault rifles and rapid-firing multiple-round

## If Liberals Thought Like Conservatives (continued)

weapons, ipso facto: all gun fanatics are crazy people, so lock up all the gun-worshippers because they're truly insane. Problem solved.

"The Constitution says I have the right to all the guns I want." Well, no—it doesn't say that at all, and yet most far-right gun advocates constantly claim it does. So—because they're directly and deliberately misrepresenting the sacred document that legally governs the way in which we Americans live, my black-and-white conclusion must be that they're committing treason against the United States of America, right? So, lock 'em all up as enemies of America. Or, better yet, isn't treason punishable by the death penalty?

We've just solved America's gun problem. That was easy, wasn't it?

Facetiousness aside, the solutions to our violent society aren't so easy. But nuance and balance must be considered. Despite the Supreme Court's 2008 District of Columbia v. Heller ruling (right up there with "Citizens United" as a case study of judicial overreach and sheer inanity) the Constitution is clear, and the Founders knew what they were doing. The very words "well-regulated" cannot be ignored in the second amendment—despite the Roberts court. And the Founders of this nation gave us all the tools we need (if not backbone) for melding that living document to reflect the times in which we live. That's exactly what Madison (et al) told us they wanted us to do. And it's past time we had the colorful courage to insure that children can go to school not to cower and fear, but to learn. The respect for gray logic and simple wisdom rather than right-wing rhetoric.

After all – we're still the U.S.A., not the U.S. of N.R.A.

## Fairly Unbalanced At The Speed of Lies

By Peter Cavanaugh

It sometimes seems half my old friends are three-quarters nuts, but few of them watch FOX.

Given a career background in broadcasting and advertising from the late '50's onward—"Mad Men" being outrageously authentic—this might not come as a complete surprise, but I should offer further subjective commentary that these particular vocational endeavors did and do require a certain degree of basic smarts, however jaded.

And so it was I found myself not thoroughly mystified in early December when a "Press Release" was released by an outfit identifying itself as "The Intelligence Institute" stating that its researchers tested 5,000 people measuring everything from cognitive aptitude to common sense and found that people who identified themselves as FOX News viewers and "Conservative" had, on average, significantly lower intelligent quotients. The results of this "4 year study" were said to solidly establish the fact Americans who obtain their news from FOX News channel have an average IQ of 80, which would represent a 20 point deficit from a norm of 100—not that far from special needs.

But there was no Santa Claus. Such dramatic testimony quickly turned out to be a fanciful hoax concocted as a Pre-Christmas prank by who knows whom, but I am happy to report that investigation into the authenticity of such a delicious allegation did establish several unchallenged findings by the University College London Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience.

It seems Conservatives regularly demonstrate their proclivity for accepting without challenge many outrageous falsehoods presented by FOX personalities and their foam-at-the-mouth counterparts in Talk Radio due to enlarged amygdalas, such condition

## Fairly Unbalanced At The Speed of Lies (continued)

being associated with greater emotional inflexibility and accelerated danger response. Have you checked yours today? This physiological variance would seem to account for many Conservatives displaying a greater susceptibility to conspiracy models of thinking, "they're coming for our guns" being a timely case in point.

Absurdly spun tales driven by anxiety and fear find immediate, almost pleasurable acceptance in the minds of our enlarged amygdala brethren, perhaps making more understandable ready acceptance of such novel concepts as unqualified "American exceptionalism", "Obama otherness" and "enhanced interrogation."

An excellent book entitled, "The Republican Brain" by Chris Mooney (John Wiley & Sons - 2012) tends to strongly echo the idea of congenitally impaired cognizance, as does a Fairleigh Dickinson University study which reveals that FOX viewers are the worst-informed media consumers in the America they profess to love. PBS came in first, just ahead of "The Daily Show" with Jon Stewart. How 'bout that?

Mooney offers fascinating elaboration, but it pretty much comes down to ready Republican acceptance of only those thoughts, ideas and philosophies that offer comfortable conformity with already established, often pre-conditioned beliefs. Ultimately, it may be more "no new" than "I.Q"—the last mind set we need as, ready or not, we accelerate our collective slide through time.

Paraphrasing the late Bette Davis as she so brilliantly spoke of aging—"The 21st Century is no place for sissies."

I love the quote Mr. Mooney chose to open his book and close with it here:

"Reality has a well-known liberal bias."—Stephen Colbert

## Mariposa Democratic Club January Meeting

Notes By Steve Smallcombe

Speaker: Dick Whittington, YARTS Transit Manager

Counties involved in YARTS: Merced, Mariposa and Mono. Under a Joint Powers Authority (“JPA”) since year 2000; about 95,000 passengers last year. Last year was the first time YARTS ran busses in Tuolumne County. Originally Tuolumne and Madera were supposed to be part of YARTS, but they dropped out.

Yosemite Valley is capable of handling and parking about 7,000 cars, but on July 3, 2011—11,000 cars entered Yosemite Valley, so the National Park Service (“NPS”) is interested in doing something about the cars and congestion in general. There were 43 days of parking/congestion problems in 2011.

The park service offered to expand service to Madera/Oakhurst, but were turned down by the Oakhurst Visitors Center. In Tuolumne there was also a push to get people to go in during the week instead of the weekend.

YARTS received \$500 thousand in fares in 2012. One objection to YARTS is that it’s publicly subsidized, but as Dick pointed out, all public transit is subsidized as are our roads, etc. Subsidies usually require matching funds and fares can’t be used for that, so NPS gives \$300,000/yr and the various counties in the Joint Powers Agreement also contribute, with Mariposa County at \$135K/yr; Merced at \$85K and Mono County at \$30K/yr. YARTS also contracts with Amtrak to provide Amtrak Thruway service to Mariposa County destinations, including Yosemite NP year-round, and Mono County destinations in the summer. Also involved is 5311F funding from the state (involves transporting people from rural areas into urban areas).

YARTS owns 8 busses now which are cheaper to run than using

## Mariposa Democratic Club January Meeting (continued)

contractors and the buses are cleaner running, meeting or exceeding CA Air Resources Board requirements for that type of vehicle. They run as clean as natural gas. Also, the YARTS busses are the only public transit to offer three-point seatbelts. The cost is about \$580K per bus; if YARTS purchased a hybrid, it would be \$825K per bus.

Apparently, Oakhurst doesn’t want YARTS to stop in Oakhurst, but Fresno plans to use Highway 41, and is evaluating the airport, Amtrak and Greyhound stations for collection points in Fresno.

The Merced River Plan came out recently from the NPS—2,500 pages—and concluded that there is a need to reduce congestion in the park. If YARTS just carried 10% of the traffic into the park (that would be 400,000 people) the park wouldn’t be congested. YARTS will never have the capacity to replace cars. And the “no cars” restriction is no longer in the new plan.

Dick said 35% of ridership is commuters.

It was mentioned that the last bus leaves Yosemite at 6 PM, which doesn’t work well for people working in restaurants and other concessions in the park. In the WINTER, the last bus leaves the park at 6 PM. (In the summer it leaves at 8:30 PM) Apparently, Delaware North Companies in the past hasn’t been cooperative about getting YARTS to work with their employees’ schedules.

Bike racks on YARTS? The bike racks on the front of the YARTS buses would make the buses longer than the state length restriction of 45 feet AND would keep the buses from being able to get across the DETOUR bridges on Hwy 140, which also has a 45-foot restriction. However, bikes can be put in the luggage compartment.

## Economics For Dummies (Like Me)

By Lucille Apcar

I opened one of my bank statements yesterday, and looked at the dismal earnings in my little passbook savings account. Yes, I keep one of those silly things just in case I need emergency funds—you never know when another Telegraph Fire occurs, an earthquake or a Sandy hurricane. For the entire year 2012, my emergency money earned 0.15%. Sad.

But I try to take a pragmatic view on this state of affairs. In spite of the fact that I remember when an account earned 5%, 7%, and in one period of time, as much as 10 or 12%. Being an avid follower of Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman whom I hope will turn out to be our next Secretary of the Treasury, I keep wondering why our Government doesn't take full advantage of such low interest rates. Professor Krugman has pointed this out time and again.

Just think of the impact putting people back to work will make for our faltering economy. And in jobs that do not require college degrees, just a strong pair of arms and a strong back and a little skill with tools.

Jobs for people mean much needed revenue from their taxes will rise immediately, via the payroll deduction for Income, Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment Insurance, etc. Not to mention that expenditures for welfare and food stamp programs will go down. I am talking about mending our infrastructure.

Our roads, bridges, highways, school buildings, even our aging public transit systems all badly need work, not to mention our power grids, flood control, sewer systems. Talk about "shovel ready"? The shovels are ready and waiting and have been for quite some time. Yet all the talk in Washington centers around our "Fiscal Cliff", our "Deficit Spending" and wanting "Less

## Economics For Dummies (Like Me)

Government". How very foolish, when we should be taking maximum advantage of almost free money financed by bondholders.

Bondholders such as China. The United States is in the unique position of being able to print its own money. So when General Motors, Chrysler, AIG and a number of other large corporations showed signs of faltering, the U.S. stepped in and lent them money, which is now being paid back with profitable interest.

So what in Heaven's name is so wrong about letting the Chinese finance our back-to-work projects? Seems to me it makes sense, and not just sense. With such low interest rates, it does seem entirely possible we will come out of this recession with a stronger country, a modern infrastructure, and prospects of a better future for generations to come. And we will be in the enviable position of paying the Chinese back at the original low rates while our new issues of bonds quite possibly will start paying us, the savers, a little better return.



## CDP-AD 5 Convention Representative Elections

Report by: Peter Leinau, Poet Laureate

'Twas the day of the voting across the AD,  
all the Dems were a-gathering! It's Dem-ocracy!

There'd be voting in Jackson,  
and in Coarsegold, too,  
and the convenors wondered,  
what were they to do?

'Cuz you can't be two places at once (donta know),  
And E-Board nominations might come from the floor.

In one location  
and not in the other!  
How were we to vote?  
Oh, good grief! What a bother!

The convenors, they sat and they thought and they thought,  
then they realized, "There are cell phones we've got!"

And so through the wonders  
of technology,  
two places were one  
when they had to be.

Nominations were made, gathered Dems all heard plain,  
then the matter was settled by voter acclaim!

New representation  
gets us on our way!  
Thanks to the convenors,  
who made it happen today.

## CDP-AD 5 Convention Representative Elections

### PHOTOS



**Civil Discourse: A Lost Art?**

By Chip Ashley

People don't seem to know how to argue civilly anymore, and generally conservatives are worse at arguing than liberals. We've all heard about how liberals use fact-based arguments while conservatives are not concerned about facts, which is generally true, in my opinion, but as with all general truths, there are plenty of exceptions.

However, there is far too much illogical argument from both sides, especially name-calling and distortion of all kinds. One reason for this is that few of us know the rules of civil discourse and basic logic because there is no longer a concerted effort to teach these rules or that these rules have real value. Few people understand—maybe they never did understand—concepts like the red herring, the camel's nose under the tent, the end justifying the means, etc. etc.

Even graduating from high school way back in 1969, I do not recall a consistent curriculum aimed at teaching argumentation. Indeed, I had to learn argumentation and logic bit by bit through my career as an English composition instructor.

A Joni Mitchell song written way back about the time I graduated high school refers to "aging children." Too many "adults" nowadays—I am not an exception, I must admit, at times—are aging children, particularly in the way they disagree with each other, reacting instead of responding, shouting instead of listening and analyzing—and thinking with real awareness and presence—mindfulness—which is a learned skill. The US Congress is full of such aging children.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mariposa: Annual Dues are \$10.00 per person  
\$15.00 family  
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

\_\_\_ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person

\_\_\_ New Member or \_\_\_ Renewal:

How did you find out about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing** Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical** Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisorial District (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail form and check payable to:

Mariposa Democratic Club -or- Oakhurst Democratic Club  
PO Box 5008-268 PO Box 760  
Mariposa, CA 95338 Oakhurst, CA 93644  
(209) 742-1010 (559) 658-2342