

Next Meeting
Tuesday, May 22, 7:30PM
David K. Hayward Center
2000 Artesia Boulevard
Redondo Beach

Beach Cities Democratic Club



P.O. Box 2192, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

May, 2007

Direct From the Convention



Above: BCDC members at the Convention dinner organized by the new AD Super Club. Below, Teresa Bird and Diane Strack outside the Convention Hall. Lori Geittmann listens to John Garamendi at the Senior Caucus. Photos courtesy of Carolyn Waters. Bottom: Young Hillary fan, photo courtesy of Vanessa Poster. More photos inside.



What a convention!! Everything that could happen happened. First let me say how much I enjoyed seeing and being in the company of such great Democrats from the 53rd ADDC.

The "Good:" All the candidates were awesome in their deliveries, we are lucky to have such a caliber of Presidential candidates (sorry I missed John Edwards' speech). We also got to hear from Nancy Pelosi.

The business of the convention went smoothly enough, but the focus was the upcoming Presidential campaigns.

The "Bad:" Some of our good people were ill, like Lori Geittmann and Shirlee Browne and Marcia and Mark Haskin, and they missed some of the convention. Also, Edna fell and broke her collar bone and she missed the entire convention.

This is my critique and only mine, regarding the SD Convention Hall. It was too dark inside; I missed many friends that I could not see inside. I have been to so many conventions and this hall is not the best. Lots of the fun of going to a Democratic convention is you get to see all of the people you have known down through the years. Ah well! Stop complaining, Teresa!

Now the "Beautiful:" Bobbi Buescher put on a magnificent dinner on Saturday night for the 53rd. The Breakfast with Jenny was also a great event. Thank you Bobbi and Jenny. We had so much fun with all the delegates, especially those from our own district. What a great bunch. I believe we have the best bunch of Dems in the entire state of California.

On a personal note, I want to say a few words about Bobbi's brother Chris. What a guy! He was so helpful to Diane, Bobbi and me when we had to help Edna in her time of need. There are a lot of funny stories we experienced and I'm sure we will share them with all of you. Many, many thanks to you for all you have done as the "best damn Dems in California."

As ever, Teresa

My convention analysis in a nutshell:

I just got back from the State Democratic Convention in San Diego. What an exciting weekend! For once we have a full slate of candidates, each of whom would be a fantastic president. Inspired by my past experiences building gingerbread houses and receiving various awards (i.e. most colorful, most cozy, most romantic) I have decided to bestow similar awards on our Democratic presidential candidates.

Most Presidential: Hillary Clinton

Most Qualified: Bill Richardson

Most Significant Historical Contribution: Mike Gravel (He is the Senator who in 1972 read the Pentagon Papers into the congressional record.)

Most Charismatic: Barack Obama

Most Gorgeous Spouse: Dennis Kucinich

Most Diverse Experience: Chris Dodd

Most Likely to be the Next President of the United States: John Edwards

Vanessa Poster

Visit our Website at lafn.org/politics/bcdc

From the President

The Beginning of the End???

Earlier this month, a group of “moderate”



Republican house members went to the White House to tell George W. Bush that support for the war in Iraq had dried up. According to reports in the press, it was a very “blunt” discussion with the Administration—journalistic code for telling someone what they don’t want to hear.

The development was stunning—not for the facts that the “moderates” conveyed. Indeed, everyone who lives in America has known for more than a year that the Iraq War is deeply unpopular, part of the reason that Bush’s dismal approval ratings rival only Richard Nixon’s pre-resignation numbers. But stunning because, for the first time in more than six years, a group of Republicans realized that Bush’s recklessness was putting at risk something very dear to them. No, not the good of the country, as Republicans in Congress have demonstrated time and again (through Mark Foley, Jack Abramoff, Bob Ney, and Tom DeLay) that the good

of the country is secondary to their effort to staying in power.

These “moderate” Republican Congressmen reported to Bush that the war in Iraq had become so unpopular that it was threatening their chances for re-election in 2008. You bet it is.

Sadly, eleven “moderates” is not enough to overturn Bush’s veto, and the “moderates” have not yet called for a withdrawal. But the momentum is growing. With 61% of Americans saying that they do not want Congress to provide funding for the war unless there is either a timetable for withdrawal or benchmarks for the Iraqi government, this is not the last “blunt” conversation that Bush will have with other Republicans.

Our goal, as Democrats and Americans, remains the same—to keep the pressure on the administration, to expose their abuses and failures, and to convince more people in Republican-held districts that they either need to get their Congressman to have a “blunt” conversation with Bush, or they need to get another Congressman. History may show that this meeting was the beginning of the end. Now, we need to end it, either by a vote in Congress, or a vote of the American people next November.

Lee Fink

April Recap

No Child Left Behind?

Our guest speaker this month was Mira Costa High School drama teacher Carol Mathews, who told us about the many drawbacks of the No Child Left Behind law. Ms. Mathews serves as CTA State council chair and president of the Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association. She goes to Washington four times a year to lobby on behalf of public education.

On her last visit, Mathews said what a joy it was to see the Republicans moving their furniture out of offices to make way for the new Democratic majority.

The CTA is working hard to persuade lawmakers to abandon No Child Left Behind and reinstate the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ESEA was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson as part of the War on Poverty.

In its exclusive focus on labeling students, NCLB ends up punishing public schools. Its one-size-fits-all approach uses a single test score to measure student achievement. When Americans learn about the details of this law, polls show that seven out of ten of them disapprove of what it is doing to our schools and classrooms. More than one hundred national organizations have signed a joint statement calling for changes to the law during reauthorization.

One of the worst myths surrounding NCLB is that Congress is providing the resources to meet the law’s many mandates. In fact, Congress has been shortchanging states, schools, and parents to the tune of \$50 billion since the law took effect. When it funded the 2006-07 school year, Congress cut over \$1 billion from the program, bringing the level of funding below what was provided three years ago.

In a June, 2006, report, the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University

Solar Homes Tour

Saturday, June 16
8:30 to 4:00

Don’t miss the Environmental Priorities Network’s second annual Solar Homes Tour! Each home will be open for two hours.

Pick up a flier listing directions at the Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Drive, RPV, on June 16th, or contact Jane Affonso at 310-372-7202 or jgaffonso@gmail.com or David Dutra at 310-530-0846, dutra_david@hotmail.com.



Mira Costa drama teacher Carol Mathews with Lee. Ms. Mathews debunked the No Child Left Behind myths.

said that NCLB did not have a significant impact on improving math and reading achievement and it has not helped the states significantly narrow the achievement gap.

Mathews handed out a sheet listing seven myths of No Child Left Behind. Instead of improving public education, the law has narrowed the curriculum, caused more students to fail, and taken the joy out of teaching. Many people believe that President Bush is set on destroying public education in favor of school vouchers—privatization—which would indeed leave many children behind.

What can be done? Go online or call Jane Harman and urge her to support reauthorization of ESEA and cancel No Child Left Behind. Or else tell her to rewrite the law to call for using more than one test score, provide assistance instead of sanctions, and restore funding to our public schools.

In addition to her eyewitness report, Vanessa Poster sent these lively pictures from the April 27—29 Convention in San Diego. Clockwise from top left: Vanessa with Senator Gravel; Lee Fink with John Garamendi; Dennis Kucinich; John Edwards.



Club Business

Lee opened the meeting with the news that Kathleen Paralusz has returned to the area and is willing to serve as our interim club secretary. Kathleen was voted in by acclamation.

Lee named this year's nominating committee. Made up of past club presidents, it includes Bobbi Buescher, Lori Geittmann, Mustapha Sesay, Vi Mullins, and Teresa Bird, with Bobbi as chair.

We discussed the upcoming Democratic Convention in San Diego. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will be one of the featured speakers. The 53rd AD plans to hold a dinner party on Saturday night which will cost half as much as the official dinner party.

Ray Waters reported from County Committee that they will soon be making endorsements for their Democrat of the Year award. Susie Shannon, an activist from the organization Poverty

Matters, spoke at their meeting. She had recently met with staff from Assemblyman Paul Koretz's office in Sacramento to present a petition in support of AJR39, a California-wide impeachment resolution.



Tammy Khan, who works for Assemblyman Lieu

Tammy Khan, the field representative for Assemblyman Ted Lieu, introduced herself and said that Ted has a

new office at 500 Center Street in El Segundo. Some of his pending legislation includes a Green Line extension, green building standards for government buildings, and increased accountability for sewage spills.

Bobbi gave an update on the new Super Club. Their April 19 kickoff meeting at the Nomad and Planet Chic Imports center was a big success. The speaker, Mr. Asad Farhad, former Deputy Minister of Finance for Afghanistan and currently an advisor to the World Bank, spoke to the group on why the current US policy in Afghanistan is failing. Instead of trying to force an unwelcome form of democracy onto the country, the Americans should have given practical help to the Afghan people with new business startups, and then left. The Afghans do not want what we're imposing on them and now they just plan to wait us out.

Super Club meetings are on third Thursdays at 7:00 at the DAC.

Tony Hale reported that the Palos Verdes Club is putting the environment back on the agenda. Their May 20 meeting will feature Dency Nelson speaking about his electric car and solar home, and the film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" will be shown.

Tony said the Democratic Action

(Continued on page 4)

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Membership
Kathleen Paralusz
Secretary
Edna Murphy—310-545-6292
Treasurer
Ray Waters—310-374-4744
Vice-President
Lee Fink—310-370-3020
President

P.O. Box 2192, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

*Beach Cities
Democratic Club*



(Club business, continued from page 3)

Center is in its second year of operation with phone banks in place. The DAC board decided not to pay rent for the offices, which are free to us only as long as no federal campaigning takes place on the premises. All other political work is permitted. The center still needs to raise funds to cover insurance and miscellaneous costs.

Teresa Bird reported that the Torrance Democratic Club has started up again with Bob Dye as president. They meet on second Wednesdays at 7:00 at the Torrance Airport.

Vi Mullins spoke in honor of the late Congresswoman Juanita Millender McDonald, and the club adjourned in her memory.

“One of my concerns is that the health care not be as good as it can possibly be.”—President Bush, on benefits provided to military personnel, Tipp City, Ohio, April 19, 2007.

POSTED ON SLATE, APRIL 26, 2007 BY JACOB WEISBERG

Websites related to articles in this issue: Democratic Action Center—www.democraticactioncenter.com. Information about the Energy Fair—www.southbayenergyfair.com. Ted Lieu’s website—www.assembly.ca.