

Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 24, 7:30PM
David K. Hayward Center
2000 Artesia Boulevard, R.B.
See page 4 for program

Beach Cities
Democratic Club 

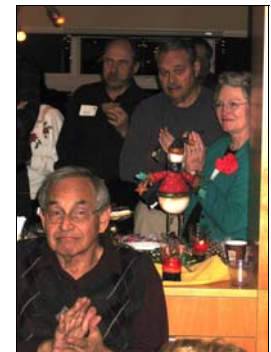
P.O. Box 2192, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

January, 2006

Holiday Scenes



Again this season, club members enjoyed the warm and spacious ambience of Ray Waters's Hermosa Beach home at our end-of-the-year party. Following the traditional turkey dinner, President Lee officiated at our White Donkey auction. Many people donated quality items, and the event netted over \$300 for our treasury. He also surprised board members and committee chairs with a bottle of wine for each, along with thanks and praise for our hard work. It was good to mingle with new and old friends as we look forward to a busy election year.



From the President

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death

The NSA has been conducting a program to spy on Americans without obtaining warrants, without Congressional authorization, and in contravention of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. This activity is well-suited for Watergate-era plumbers and third world tyrants, but is anathema to Americans in the 21st Century. Strangely, this administration has proudly trumpeted the program as part of the “war” on terrorism, and has claimed that the President’s powers as Commander-in-Chief trump Americans’ civil rights. By this reasoning, George W. Bush, like King George III before him, “has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power”¹ an action which, in earlier times, started a revolution that changed the world.

I hardly need to discuss the flawed legal analysis, which has been discredited in nearly every quarter. But Bush does not rely on legal reasoning to support his actions. Instead, this administration believes that any action can be justified to the public by invoking the fear of a terrorist threat. (Perhaps the fears of terrorism would have subsided if he had not so badly mismanaged two wars, appointed incompetent cronies, and failed to catch Osama, but that is a topic for another column.) If the program were in fact just aimed at terrorists, they might have gotten away with it. But what we are finding out is that the NSA spying program is broad in scope. NSA whistleblower Russell Tice has indicated that the program covered millions of Americans. I learned recently that a law school club that I supported has been classified as “possibly



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November Recap

Our Local Elections

Although our November speaker wasn’t able to make it, we shared an upbeat analysis of the special election results. Lee pointed out that three Democrats won office in Hermosa Beach: Michael Keegan, Howard Fishman, and J.R. Reviczky.

In Manhattan Beach, there are three Democrats on the city council, although the city has adopted a policy not to declare political affiliation. The top vote-getter on the school board, Ida Vanderpoorte, is also a Democrat.

The propositions went very much in our favor. Tony Hale pointed out that Prop 73, limiting abortion rights, was defeated by a slim margin but it was still greater than George W. Bush’s margin of victory (2.9% vs. 2.5%). He said the Bush people lost voter share in all three big states that had gay marriage bans on the ballot.

In California, the Governor’s numbers have plummeted, largely because of his attack on public employees but also because he misread

public sentiments on gay and reproductive rights, redistricting, and public spending. Tony concluded that Democrats do not need to run away from our core values: pro choice, inclusiveness, and equality.

Sadly, we also learned that Fishman will step down before taking office in Hermosa

Beach because his wife has a serious medical condition. The Council has 30 days to decide how to fill the vacancy. They can appoint any eligible



Tony Hale gave details about the defeated propositions.

Hermosa Beach resident, call a special election, or fill the seat temporarily and hold an election later. Many people hope they will award the seat to Jeff Duclos, who came in fourth.

Club Business

Many people have not renewed their club memberships. Lee passed out phone lists for volunteers to call and remind people to renew. There was discussion about extending the grace period from six to nine months, but no action was taken.

Jim Aldinger reported on a special council meeting on undergrounding in Manhattan Beach. The assessment districts were formed five years ago by a majority of voters, but the price tag has now risen much higher than many of these residents had anticipated.

Two of three undergrounding districts now up for a vote have a clear majority to proceed, but the third has a very close margin. Council members Joyce Fahey and Mitch Ward felt District 4 was too close to call and voted to oppose the resolution. There are

currently 14 active or proposed utility districts in the city.

Aldinger said the Metlox business park would open on December 1. The police and fire facilities are running approximately one year late.

Tony Hale announced that he has been elected president of the Palos Verdes Democratic Club. Since their bylaws prohibit people from serving as officers in more than one club at a time, he will step down as our vice-president in January, although he pledged to stay active as a member. Barbara Farren has been elected vice-president of that club. We congratulate them both and acknowledge the long-standing bond between the two organizations.

Diane Strack announced that we are starting our own chapter of the California Clean Money Campaign in the South Bay.

Stop Bush's Illegal Wiretaps— Act now!

On Barbara Boxer's website are several calls to action and online petitions to sign and forward to Congress. As of this writing, 58,093 Americans had signed her petition on illegal wiretaps.

Here is what she says:

"It's now been 5 days since President Bush admitted to authorizing the National Security Agency to spy on Americans without court order—a system he reauthorized as many as 3 dozen times since 2001. Yet despite the outcry from millions of Americans—both Democrats and Republicans alike—President Bush has stubbornly promised to continue this illegal and unconstitutional activity.

"How can the President of the United States—the highest elected official in our land, a leader who swore an oath to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution"—so egregiously and repeatedly violate our most basic civil liberties?"

"It's time for Congress to act — to thoroughly investigate the President's actions now.

"Urge Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter to hold hearings into the President's conduct, before beginning Supreme Court nomination hearings for Judge Alito—sign my petition today!"

Visit barbaraboxer.com to participate. You can also join her PAC For a Change.



Comments? Opinions? Calls to action? Announcements?

Here's a renewed invitation to contribute to the newsletter. Or share a letter you've had published in the papers recently. Help out your editor and our lone opinion columnist.

Remember, it's your newsletter!

Hold Bush Accountable

LETTER FROM MONROE WEINSTOCK
PUBLISHED IN THE LOS ANGELES
TIMES, DECEMBER 14, 2005

Governor Blanco of Louisiana got it exactly right when she said, "If we can re-build Baghdad, we can re-build New Orleans." The ivory tower thinker that the President uses for economics indicates that since the Entergy Corp. (utility) is a regulated monopoly, they will receive no government funds to re-build after Katrina.

The cost will be passed on to the public by super-higher rates. In September the President announced from the French Quarter that he pledged to rebuild Gulf Coast communities so that they would be "better and stronger" than before Hurricanes Katrina & Rita. He further added that "federal funds will cover the great majority of the costs of repairing public infrastructure in the disaster zone."

The actions do not relate to the promises & he lied again!

2006 CDC Statewide Convention

Mar 24-26, 2006

The 2006 California Democratic Council statewide convention will include endorsement consideration in all statewide Democratic primaries during a weekend of training sessions, inspirational speeches, networking and campaign preparation. CDC and the host Mission City Democratic Club invite you to spend a Democratic activist weekend in Santa Clara, March 24-26.

Sponsored By CDC, www.cdc-ca.org
Contact Chris Stampolis,
CDC President, president@cdc-ca.org
800-446-9709

Location:

Santa Clara Convention Center
Santa Clara, CA 95054

Monroe's Corner



To begin, I wish you all a HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR, PROSPERO ANO NUEVO.

I had planned to begin dealing with the foibles, misdeeds, errors, insincerities, & flat-out lies of our current Administration in Washington because it gets easier to find fault & failures being made in the name of the people of the USA. However, in December '05 the New York Times reported that George W. had authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to listen in on thousands of phone calls made in this country without getting the necessary court orders. Dubya's attorneys maintain that he has the authority during wartime to use secret spying methods. However, the constitution forbids the government from spying on Americans in the USA.

In 1970 the Congress established a special court (FISA) as the exclusive arbiter of requests to conduct domestic intelligence gathering. Dubya on the other hand has said that the surveillance has helped deter & prevent possible terrorist attacks in the USA. He gives no specifics! The fact also remains that we have & need the protection of the 4th Amendment to the Constitution, which protects us all from..."unreasonable searches & seizures."

Senator Feingold (Dem. from Wisc.) has said, "he is a President, not a King..." And to go further, the President cannot pick and choose which laws he will or will not follow. In truth, Dubya can initiate spying domestically and wait 72 hours before requesting judicial approval. He is not stymied or delayed and the FISA courts have approved 99.5% of all his requests.

The latest reports indicate that the Justice Dept. is not investigating the

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*Beach Cities
 Democratic Club*



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 violent” by the Pentagon. These are not strangers whose rights are being trampled on, but friends, neighbors, and maybe even you.

“We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution.”² America is a country founded with no common race, religion, or language. It is a country founded solely on the principle “that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.”³ More than anything, the War on Terrorism is a battle of ideas—open and free societies against the tyranny of fundamentalist dictates. We cannot win the War on Terrorism by violating the principles on which this country is founded, but we can lose it by disregarding our most important principles. Patrick Henry famously recognized that our freedoms were more important when he declared “give me liberty or give me death.”⁴

The 2006 elections will likely be dominated by other issues—Jack Abramoff and the Republican corrup-

tion scandal; the Republican efforts to privatize social security; the Alito appointment; the administration’s incompetent handling of the Iraq war and domestic disasters. These may have more political play, but ultimately none is more important than the fabric of our democracy.

Lee Fink

¹ Thomas Jefferson et. al., *Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776.

² John F. Kennedy, *Inaugural Address*, January 20, 1961.

³ Thomas Jefferson, et. al., *Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776

⁴ Patrick Henry, *Address to the Virginia House of Burgesses*, March 23, 1775.

Our January program includes:

- Update on Debra Bowen’s campaign for Secretary of State
- Election of new club vice president
- Planning for a South Bay Area Candidates Forum (in conjunction with other South Bay democratic clubs)

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legality of illegal wire taps, but instead looking to find who leaked the fact that there was domestic spying by the government. I go back to a time when we worried about the Nazi Gestapo, the Russian NKVD & the OGPU. History goes back to the Spanish Inquisition. It sticks in my craw to think that we are so insecure & frightened that we are no longer free. We are becoming shadow people with no moral compass, no moral fiber, no moral senses.

Finally, there is the frequently quoted comment by good old Ben Franklin who said, “Those who would give up essential liberty in the pursuit of a little temporary security deserve neither liberty nor security.” And I must add, Edward R. Murrow who said, “...We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must not walk in fear...we can deny our heritage and our history, but we cannot escape responsibility for the result.”

Monroe Weinstock