

Hayward Demos Democratic Club

June 2005 Newsletter

Editors: Jim Forsyth(581-5169), Peter Hendley(582-7011)

www.haywarddemos.org

President's Message by Craig Williams California Double Play

This is the time of year when people are focusing more on the A's and Giants than on the sport of politics. So wouldn't it be poetic justice if we could not only pass a Single Payer Health Insurance bill but also a Single Payer Auto Insurance bill, a California double play. This is sometimes called 'pay as you go' auto insurance, where the cost of insurance is included into the price per gallon of gasoline. Surely that would excite Californians of all stripes. A double play would get almost every one's attention since few people are happy with auto insurance rates. The way a progressive auto insurance system would work would be to have customers pay their basic coverage at the pump. There are several very big advantages doing it this way: 1. Like Medicare, much of the overhead is reduced dramatically because it would be more efficiently collected, auto insurance overhead reductions would mean a big savings for consumers. 2. By paying at the pump you give people the strong incentive to use less fuel and drive smaller cars, which reduces pollution as well as our need for foreign supplies of oil. and 3. an estimated 25 percent of the population don't have insurance and the rest of us are indirectly paying for them. With "pay as you go" no one can avoid paying if they drive, which is not the case now. 4. Another big part of auto insurance cost are lawyer fees. With a single payer you wouldn't have lawyer disputes since the single payer would be the state system. 5 Also there are built-in features of the current system that make it an uncompetitive system, insurance agents are more interested in having fewer real good customers than being efficient and drawing more customers, which is counter to how most businesses work. Also body work estimates err on the side of excess since higher body work fees end up becoming more money for the insurance companies to invest, an incentive that creates inefficiency and therefore higher rates. 6. Insurance lobbyists are big campaign donors in Sacramento, their corrupt influence would be reduced with their reduction in relevance in Sacramento. 7. Creative combo systems of mass transportation and short term car rentals could develop out of a Single Payer Car Insurance structure. Single Payer Health Insurance should get out of Committee and might even reach the Governor's desk. The poverty of our democratic discourse is such that there will be very little coverage of this vital issue by the big broadcasters. That's also true of most issues. Single Payer won't be covered because the media outlets would rather focus on crime. The local stations cover such a wide area 80 or so towns in the Bay Area, that they can't cover every city and town. They do however have slogans like "complete local coverage," which when you think of it, is pretty Orwellian. To make this short-coming up to local citizens and viewers, they could at least do

President, Craig Williams 636-0643
Vice-president, Mike Villalba 636-1432
Secretary, Alison Corson 881-1802
Treasurer, Ginny DeMartini 781-0944
Membership Director, Al Mendall 441-7487
Webmaster, Jeff Winkler, At large: Elsa Glines, Mary Hayashi, Pat Kellner, Mary Ann Reno, Harry Scott, Rick Trullinger

June Meeting

Friday, June 17, 7 pm

Westminster Hills Presbyterian Church

27287 Patrick Ave., Hayward (Across from Weekes Park Library)

Amy Everitt, Director of NARAL Pro-Choice California, will discuss the recently qualified initiative that would amend the Constitution to require a physician to notify the parents of a minor seeking an abortion 48 hours before the procedure could be performed. It will go on the next statewide ballot. Ms Everitt has held her present position for two years. Previously she has been an advocate for better schools in California and Political Director for the Democratic National Committee. NARAL's mission is to "develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion." The website is www.prochoicecalifornia.org

a decent job of covering statewide issues. Instead they focus on crime, which is sort of a media double play against us. Instead of any local coverage we get crime, while statewide issues gets tossed as well, a corporate media double play. Logistically almost impossible to cover local issues, they add insult to injury by replacing Sacramento politics with fear or crime media. Even with thirty second ads we could quickly explain the big advantages of Single Payer: Thirty seconds could sound something like this, "Doctors like it because there is less paper work, nurses because they are providing better care, businesses because it's cheaper, unions because it's no longer a big negotiation issue, consumers because they feel it's much better than the U.S. system, liberals because there's universal coverage and even conservatives prefer it because of the fact that there is less bureaucracy!"

The corporate media method of running ads over and over again, with this 30 second message would make 'single payer' as clear as a bell, but the health care advocates are not allowed these short messages and very little if any journalistic attention.

Yet in our poverty of democracy, a majority of the population won't even know what 'single payer' is, but will be engaged by the media with heavy doses of Michael Jackson and the like. A media specialist once said "they can't control how you think, but can control what you think about." Locally, our mass media uses slogans like "we care about you" and "7 on your side." They care about us but not our health, apparently.

(Continued on page 3)

Professor John Harte declares that Global Warming must be halted. By Harry Scott

U.C. Professor John Harte declared in his speech entitled "Global Warming: Causes, Consequences, Cures" to the 46 attendees at the May 27 Hayward Demos meeting that the world must take all necessary measures to halt Global Warming. He began his talk telling how scientific studies have proven that Global Warming, which coincided with the Industrial Revolution, is being caused by the burning of the fossil fuels oil and coal as the chief source of energy. The burning of these fuels produces a layer of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere which prevents the dissipation of heat. CO₂ atmospheric concentration has increased from 280 parts per million (PPM) in the 19th century prior to a tremendous increase in fossil fuel burning, which is now considered background level, to 380 PPM, a 30% increase. There has been a one degree increase in the earth's temperature in the past 50 years. Records over a thousand years, indicate temperatures have only varied a few tenths of a degree. At the rate of increase in burning fossil fuels, the prospects are for a 7-8 degree rise in temperatures which can lead to disastrous consequences. The oceans could rise 3 feet from the melting of the ice and snow.

Professor Harte named an extensive list of potential threats to civilization as follows:

(1) Some Island nations will disappear, (2) Great damage will occur to coastal structures, (3) Water areas will greatly expand, (4) Water supplies will be threatened with high runoffs exceeding reservoir capacities, (5) Agriculture which depends on irrigation will suffer. (7) Wild fires will become more frequent, (8) Tropical diseases such as dengue fever will spread to what are today's temperate zones and become more prevalent, (9) More heat waves – temperatures of 130-135 degrees Fahrenheit are possible.

Dr. Harte named a group of myths that are used by those who reject Global Warming: Myth No.1-Global warming is an unproven theory. An international committee of climate scientists have endorsed a consensus statement supporting Global Warming. Theories are not to be proven. They are meant to disprove falsehoods. The data are enough.

Myth No. 2- The One Degree of Global warming is only an artifact by using the "Urban Warming Effect."

Scientists use data from weather stations in the countryside to exclude the known urban warming effect and the data are still valid. For eras when records of direct methods of measurement are not available, growth of tree rings, isotopes, trapped CO₂ bubbles in ice deposits and pollen records are used. Myth No. 3- The warming trend is just part of the climate cycle for which nothing can be done. The data indicates otherwise. This rate of warming is greater than shown before the ice age came upon us. Myth No. 4- Trying to prevent Global Warming will hurt the economy. International economists have stated: "We can slow the use of fossil fuel without harming the economy." Professor Harte gave the example of the use of CAFE standards for automobiles which made the autos more competitive with Japanese autos. The GNP grew at that time. We need to make autos more efficient and use alternate sources of

Several articles in the May-June Sierra Club Newspaper, the Yodeler, disclose information about political steps to implement the clean energy agenda. Despite both local and statewide

mandates to develop renewable energy, PG&E and other investor-owned utilities have done little and overhyped what they have done. "PG&E has not shown any substantial commitment to renewable energy and energy conservation," one of the articles says. It has not used \$70 million available to it to develop clean energy sources, such as wind, solar and conservation. Instead, it is now negotiating decades-long contracts to import liquefied natural gas by tanker from the middle east, Africa and Asia.

Unless cities and counties act within the next 5 or 6 months to take advantage of Community Choice Aggregation, this opportunity for bargaining a lower price from competing providers, developing clean energy and independence from PG&E, will be foreclosed for five years, according to the author of the article, Paul Fenn, who wrote the California law and the S.F. energy independence ordinance.

The 2002 law gives local governments the right to purchase power on behalf of its residents. In so doing a city would 1)use its purchasing power to get a better price 2) buy from several suppliers (including, if necessary, PG&E) and 3) increasingly utilize renewables and conservation. It is notable that the publicly-owned Sacramento Municipal Utility District uses more renewable, nonpolluting energy than any of the investor-owned utilities.

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Welcome to new members: Duncan Buchanan, Brien Allen, Sheila Sims, Eugene Marangoui and Frank McNamara..

Your mailing label indicates your membership status (or lack thereof--an xx or trial). We appreciate each and every member and hope that you will bring your membership up to date if necessary. Share the newsletter with family and friends and invite them to the meetings.

JOIN DEMOS TODAY

An Issue-oriented Grassroots Club

Family membership \$25/yr

Individual \$15-20/yr

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Send checks payable to DEMOS Club

P.O. Box 56783, Hayward CA 94545

energy such as solar and wind. This will meet requirements of the Kyoto agreements from which the U.S. withdrew.

What we must advocate:

- 1. Support a tax policy that encourages investment in alternate energy sources by giving tax breaks on profits from selling or producing these sources. He added "Channel greed into progressive channels." He opposed a "carbon tax" stating that like the sales tax it is regressive since it adds an unequal burden on people of lesser means.**
- 2. Call a halt to deforesting.**
- 3. Support funding research into alternate sources of energy**

Withdrawal from Kyoto sends a bad message to the world, he said.

In response to a question about the effect of the U.S. withdrawal from the Kyoto Agreements, Professor Harte stated he felt that the withdrawal was a bad symbol to the world.

President's message (cont'd from p 1) If the seventh biggest economy in the world didn't have a national media, they would be the laughing stocks of the developed world. California has the sixth largest economy and has very little statewide political coverage. We can't solve our problems if we can't address our problems. Part of the Single payer campaign might be a "passing of the hat" by progressive to pool some money together and pay to have local TV journalists sent to Canada to at least see what they have that's motivating a significant number of our state legislators to vote for such a significantly different distribution of health care. Aren't we a free enough nation where crossing that border isn't the media Berlin Wall. Canada is closer than Chicago. A delegation of legislators held up in Canadian hospitals might draw some attention to the issue. Maybe they would have to hold babies dolls out of Canadian hospital balcony windows to draw attention to the issue. Give us half the Michael Jackson coverage and we will take a giant step in addressing our health care needs. But I guess this is real "Never Land" for a fair health care debate.

On May 25 Congress debated for the first time a resolution calling for the President to draw up and implement a plan for the immediate withdrawal from Iraq. It was submitted by Representative Lynn Woolsey as an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill. Though it lost, 128-300, it was supported by a 2/3 majority of Democrats (not including Nancy Pelosi) and 5 Republicans.

The resolution also called for a plan to reconstruct the Iraq infrastructure and the convening of a meeting of Iraqi leaders, the UN, Arab League, and leaders of neighboring countries. They would arrange to replace U.S. troops with an international peacekeeping force, and eventually with Iraqi police and national guard.

This is a forward-looking development. Along with the potentially explosive Downing Street Memo, it can galvanize the peace movement to organize the 57% of Americans who now say the war is a mistake. Representative John Conyers has seized the British revelations to seek 100,000 signatures on a letter to Bush demanding an immediate pullout. Go to www.johnconyers.com to sign on. Kudos to both Woolsey and Conyers as well as all the members of Congress who courageously voted for the amendment.

Cindy Sheehan, who spoke to our Club in April and founder of *Gold Star Families for Peace*, said, "members of Congress know that Iraq is a mistake. I know because I have spoken to many members of the House and the Senate, Democrats and Republicans alike, who all acknowledge Iraq is a catastrophe."

The Alameda County Democratic Party is presenting *Walk the Talk*, a year-round precinct organizing workshop for East Bay Democrats. It is based on a model developed by Barbara Graves, a Democratic Party regional director, and Bruce Daniels, a computer programmer, and successfully used in Santa Cruz County during the 2004 election.

The goal is to establish a year-round Democratic presence in every East Bay neighborhood. *Walk the Talk* would include activities such as neighborhood events, systematic voter registration, and of course a GOTV drive on election day. It is designed to provide a two-way link to the Party and candidates/officeholders as well as information on ballot initiatives and election issues. The first meeting will be Saturday, July 16, noon, at the Local 250 Hall 560 20th St, Oakland. Our club will be asked to cosponsor.

An election and a machine. by Mike Villalba

The scene was the state of Ohio. A promise was made to President George W. Bush that enough Republican votes would be garnered in Ohio to ensure his reelection in 2004. This promise would come to pass. That this victory in Ohio happened

has created many doubts about the credibility of the election process in Ohio and in the U.S. itself.

The promise was made by the owner of the Diebold Electronic Voting Machine company. It uses proprietary software, not open-source software which can be examined and tested for faults. Software in these machines should be open-source to enable independent testers to check for faulty software and any potential problems.

The time has come for a National Election Commission. There need to be rules to guide states and local municipalities on proper voting protocol. We cannot have Ohio and Florida with one set of rules and another set of rules for other states. We need reasoned rules and procedures for all to follow. No one must be disenfranchised because software is tampered with. Likewise there should be adequate and equal numbers of voting machines in representative Democratic and Republican districts. All people must have an equal chance to vote.

In Ohio some Democratic precincts were woefully lacking in voting machines while other Republican districts there were two to five times more machines. This cannot happen again. People were waiting in long lines in those Democratic precincts. And rain was coming down in buckets in some places. Some voters left and went home. No wonder people doubt the fairness of the election process in Ohio.

There need to be clear guidelines for each Secretary of State. What we need is 1) a mandatory paper trail for all electronic machines. No exceptions! A voter must be able to see that his or her votes were accurately recorded. Then if she is agreeable she pushes a button to cut off the paper ballot into a retrievable ballot box, accessible in the event of a recount. 2) There must be open-source software that can be tested easily. 3) The national Election Commission must mandate fair and equal distribution of voting machines in all comparable precincts so that all voters have equal representation whatever their party affiliation. 4) Finally the Commission must assure that all machines be tested before every election by an independent contractor, using consistent and uniform rules. Machines in every part of the country must be tested equally.

Democrats have to push for this National Election Commission even if the Republicans resist. The people will see this effort and vote against the Republicans if they don't get with the program. Everyone must have a fair chance to vote! And the time to do this is now, not two months before the next election.

Acclaimed poet Adrienne Rich turned down a National Medal for the Arts award in 1997 because as she said at the time, "Where growing numbers of people are being marginalized, impoverished, scapegoated and beleaguered, I don't feel I can accept an award from the government that is pursuing these policies."

Last week she said she believes the Sept 11 disaster has been used to "crack down on dissent, on immigrants, and foreigners and activists, on libraries and school textbooks—to diffuse a climate of anxiety, ignorance and fear. To make war, not social good the national goal." (SF Chron 5-29-05)

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P.O. Box 56783

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Next public meeting: Friday,

June 17, 7 pm

Amy Everitt, NARAL Director, speaker

The Women's Caucus by Karen Weinstein, 14th AD Delegate, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club.

I attended the Women's Caucus on Friday evening of the Democratic state convention. The room was packed.. The executive committee sat at the front of the room as the Chair, Lyn Hilfenhaus, spoke of their accomplishments. Over the past year: they disbursed over \$10,000 to women candidates, they sent individuals to testify in Sacramento to support pro women and family bills, and they politically supported pay equity, the right to choose, and various health care initiatives.

After the presentation, the election of next year's officers began. This was when things got interesting. In an unexpected twist, Nancy Skinner – a 14th AD delegate – was nominated from the floor for chairperson. Nancy's nomination came as a surprise to the incumbent officers. The time allotted for voting was far too brief, and after the voting closed, I and several other women asked that it be reopened. With some reluctance, it was. Although the incumbent chairwoman won by 20 votes in the end, it was still a remarkable achievement for Nancy: she lost only by a hair without any previous campaigning. It is clear that the women in the caucus are looking for change. Many of the women did grassroots campaign work in the last election, and there was a palpable, renewed sense of energy at the caucus meeting. Given the political and strategic importance of reaching out to women not only for elections but also for legislative issues, the caucus needs to aggressively extend itself to its new members, and work towards achieving a more powerful role in the California Democratic Party. With the assault on women's rights becoming more palpable every day, there is no time to waste.

There are many ways that the Women's Caucus can improve in order for it to become the relevant and powerful force in California politics that it should be. The caucus has no website, though they have been considering proposals to implement one. As politics continues its light speed scramble onto the Internet, I would strongly suggest that the Women's Caucus follow suit. Additionally, the

Calendar

Saturday, June 11, 6:30 pm "Welcomers" are needed for the Gay Prom. Hayward's Centennial Hall. Call Jim at 581-5169

Sunday, June 12, 1 pm The parents of Rachel Corrie, the 20-year old Christian peacemaker who was killed in Palestine by an Israeli bulldozer, will discuss peace initiatives in the mideast. Straw Hat Pizza, Castro Village. Call 881-1581.

Tuesday, June 14, 9am Lobby in Sacramento for SJR 10 calling for repeal of sections of the Patriot Act. Call Harry Scott, 538-0209

Thursday, June 16 5-9 pm Demos table at Hayward Downtown Party. Call Ginny for info

Tuesday, June 28, 7 pm Castro Valley Democratic Club. Faith Lutheran Church, 20080 Redwood Rd. Call Sonya Howes 582-4818

July 4, 11am-9pm Demos day to table at Alameda County Fair. Call Ginny to help.

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Club News. Senator Liz Figueroa will speak at our July 29 meeting. There will also be information about the intensive statewide campaign to pass SB 840, Sen. Kuehl's California Health Insurance Reliability Act. Sen. Figueroa is a coauthor of the bill, which has now passed the Senate and goes to the Assembly. It will, however, be a two-year bill. Our Club has sent a resolution on the bill to the CDC Convention. Jim Forsyth will represent the Club there June 18-19 in San Bernardino. The Board voted to rejoin the Hayward Area Planning Association and donated \$100 to the National Priorities Project, which provides some of our inserts on lopsided federal spending.

caucus bylaws make no allowance for smaller committees to meet in between conventions. Smaller, more frequent committee meetings would allow individuals to participate on a local grassroots level, and would lead to the generation of energy and ideas that could galvanize the caucus from the bottom up. We must work with the Women's Caucus to engage in even more progressive, grassroots, and statewide policy work. There is a caucus meeting tentatively scheduled for August 12-14 in Sacramento, focusing on women's voter outreach and message. All Democrats are welcome and I will send out more specifics as they become available.