

# Hayward Demos Democratic Club

May 2005 Newsletter

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www.haywarddemos.org

## President's Message by Craig Williams

I decided to attend the state party convention at the last minute and am glad that I went. I initiated the local party building resolution which passed at the DNC in January and the state party also passed the resolution at the convention in LA. Of the 93 resolutions it was tied for third with the Iraq resolution. As a party we need to put resources into building the party on a local level. We have in our country what is referred to as candidate centered politics, which means parties especially on a local level are almost irrelevant; candidates control almost all the resources. Currently less than one percent of registered Democrats are members of a local party organization. As a former fund raiser it's my educated opinion that if we had some professional help in this area, by a political telemarketing company for example, we could raise the local dues paying membership by close to ten percent. The resolution calls for us coming up with a plan to address this problem. Also, the Internet makes communicating with our local people much easier. Within the Hayward Demos area there are something like 15,000 Democrat email addresses available for a modest fee.

The issue that received the most votes was the Minimum Wage issue. With NAFTA and outsourcing to China and a government controlled by corporate elites there is very little wage pressure, to the delight of Bush and company. One of my favorite issues is job security, specifically what the French government tries to do to increase workers job protection. They require employers to spend 1.5 percent of their time training employees or pay a 1.5 percent sales tax. The government doesn't want the money; they want the people receiving more training. Training gives the employee more protection and produces a more productive worker. Training on your own is also risky. Twenty percent of people who attend college make less than high school graduates!

Job security could also raise wages as well. Employers would think twice about letting employees go who have been given training for several years. The other great appeal for connecting job security to the minimum wage issue is that job security is the number one concern of many people and has tremendous appeal beyond the Democratic Party. Young people rank it their highest concern and older workers know they are expendable in an economy where employers are only loyal to their personal bonuses. One has to wonder how many people vote Republican in order to suck up to their bosses in an economy where there is little job security. Older workers are replaceable by younger employees; something which employers constantly prey on. The Party could excite the population with a job security campaign or initiative. It would significantly help the poor, appeal to the young voters, and swing a lot of other voters back into our camp where they belong.

President, Craig Williams 636-0643  
Vice-president, Mike Villalba 636-1432  
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Webmaster, Jeff Winkler, At large: Elsa Glines, Mary Hayashi, Pat Kellner, Mary Ann Reno, Harry Scott, Rick Trullinger

## May Meeting

Friday, May 27, 7 pm

Westminster Hills Presbyterian Church

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

**Professor John Harte, Ph.D.** will speak on Global Warming: Causes, Consequences, Cures. He is a member of the faculty of the U.C. Berkeley Energy and Resources Group and Ecosystems Sciences Division, College of Natural Resources. Professor Harte has conducted extensive research on how human activity affects climate change, and its link to global warming. He brings to his work a deep appreciation of the interdependence of human well being and the health of ecosystems. He has written over 150 scientific publications, including 6 books, on topics such as biodiversity, climate change, biogeochemistry, energy, and water resources.

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**Club News:** The Club will again cosponsor the annual rally at the Livermore lab on August 6 to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> year since atomic bombs were first used against people. Check our improved website for news and events and a new feature updated daily by Workers Independent News. Demos endorsed SB 840, Sen. Sheila Kuehl's successor to 921. Our July meeting will host a speaker on 840, which is now a 2-yr. Bill. It has passed two committees on party line votes. Sen. Liz Figueroa has become a coauthor of the bill. She is also introducing a resolution to repeal unconstitutional provisions of the Patriot Act. Watch our website for timely news of these bills, plus updates on Assemblymember Mark Leno's bill to legalize same sex marriage.

The June 17 meeting will discuss the threat to women's reproductive rights. Amy Everitt, State Director of NARAL, will be our speaker. The Demos day at the County Fair will be July 4, 11 am-9 pm. Call Ginny if you can help staff a table. It's fun!

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## Calendar

Saturday, May 14 11 am Cong. Stark at Hayward City Hall

Sunday, May 15, 2 pm Teach-in on the War in Iraq. St. Mary's Center, Oakland Call Lee Williamson (538-8333)

Wednesday, May 18 Senior Lobby Day in Sacramento.

Sunday, May 22, 3. Benefit for the No More Deaths (of migrants) Project at Jim Gonzales', 18724 Dubin Ct, CV Call 566-2349 for details.

Wed. May 25 Labor rally for full school funding in Sacramento

**Author and labor reporter David Bacon** was the speaker at our April 1 meeting. Notes on his talk (by Jim Forsyth):

The social and economic effects of NAFTA touch on the lives of millions of people in the U.S. and Mexico. Bacon sketched out particularly how this 10-year old law impacts indigenous people from Southern Mexico. Those of working age from Zapotec, Mixtec and other towns have migrated en masse, primarily because their livelihood as farmers in Mexico has been destroyed by imports of cheap corn and other foods and fibers from the U.S. NAFTA forbade agricultural subsidies from the Mexican government, but U.S. farm producers, especially corporations like Cargill and ADM continue to receive huge payments from our government. Additionally, IMF and World Bank policies forced Mexico to privatize land holdings (1991) doing away with the traditional ejidos. Ejidos are plots of land held by the person who worked the land, which could be inherited but not sold. The result has been the uprooting of native cultures and languages with serious psychological impacts, not to mention the hardships and privation caused by their forced removal. Billions of dollars are sent back to remaining family in Mexico by immigrants, which fuels inequality between those receiving the aid and those who do not.

Bacon also spoke about the maquiladoras, foreign owned (mostly by U.S. corporations) factories which employ these displaced workers (including many teenagers). Wages in these plants are insufficient to support family life. The average wage in Mexico has gone down since NAFTA went into effect. Owners of these facilities refuse to bear the costs of reproducing labor, such as schools or health care or even decent sanitary conditions. Mexico's few environmental laws are ignored.

The only beneficiaries of NAFTA are corporations, while workers in both Mexico and the U.S. are victims. Now Bush wants to extend NAFTA to Central America and the Caribbean with CAFTA. Indications are, though, that votes to pass CAFTA are not there, despite arm twisting. Angry demonstrations have taken place throughout Central America protesting CAFTA.

Bacon has traveled to Iraq and interviewed trade unionists there, who say that the U.S. occupation is privatizing industry and wants to retain Hussein's law which forbids independent unions and organizing in the public sector. These unionists suffered under the previous regime, but are unanimous in wanting the occupation to end and democracy restored.

"Children of NAFTA," a study of the societal impacts of U.S. policies in Mexico, is David Bacon's latest book.

### Let's Outsource Bill Gates!

Bill Gates, who makes more money before he wakes up on New Years Day than most of us earn the entire year, is asking Congress to lift the yearly limit of 65,000 foreign high tech workers. He says that he and his buddies can't find qualified workers here.

This is wrong. The current level of unemployment among high tech workers is 5.7%, higher than the national average, and this doesn't count "discouraged" workers. The head of a Washington state-based IT union says that domestic programmers are finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs.

The high tech impresarios are counting on our short memories. We know that this industry is a chief promoter of the systematic campaign to reduce taxes on corporate wealth. Prop 13 and the two-thirds requirement to increase taxes in California come to mind, as well as the notorious Bush tax cuts.

It's part of the broader agenda of privatizing all government services except the military and shifting taxes from investment to consumption. Not coincidentally, it cripples the schools that should be preparing our children for Bill Gates' jobs, so he can hypocritically cry for help in recruiting workers abroad.

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**A recent meeting** was held to bring the record of Sutter Health Corporation's stewardship of Alta Bates and Summit hospitals to the attention of legislators and the public.

The United Healthcare Workers union (formerly Local 250) which represents many workers at the hospital reviewed Sutter's promises to the community when it acquired and merged the hospitals 5 years ago.

Despite its assurances to maintain quality and affordability, today Alta Bates Summit finds itself among the one percent of U.S. hospitals to be issued a preliminary denial of accreditation by the industry investigating body. Blue Shield says that it is the "most expensive" hospital in Northern California. The union charges that, contrary to promises, important services have been shifted between the campuses without public input or prior notification.

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**Has the danger of a nuclear war** abated? Though it is probably not at the level of crisis days during the cold war, it remains high. According to Helen Caldicott, the U.S. and Russia were within 10 seconds of a nuclear exchange in 1995. There are more than 30,000 nuclear weapons in the world, and Russia and the U.S. own 95% of them. In both countries some are on hair trigger alert.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which we have signed and ratified, commits us to not develop new nuclear weapons and to gradually eliminate existing weapons. The U.S. today is violating this legal pledge, while threatening Iran and North Korea if they do not abandon their nuclear programs.