



June 2008 Newsletter
Alameda Democratic Club
Vol. XVII, No. 6

Democratic Directions

June's Meeting

Wed. June 11

7 PM

Alameda Hospital.

Author and activist

Norman Solomon on the media and Iraq.



Author and photographer David Bacon talked to the club on May 14 about immigration reform. For details, see the meeting minutes on Page 2.

Garden party to raise funds for campaign headquarters

Mark your calendars for our second fundraiser this election year. We are holding an afternoon garden party at the Ann Miller Muir Historical House, a colonial revival home in Alameda's Gold Coast neighborhood. The party will be held on Saturday July 19, from 2 pm to 5 pm.

In addition to hearing from some prominent political figures, listening to a musical quartet and enjoying food and drink in this beautiful setting, we will hold a silent auction, with many one-of-a-kind items. All proceeds will go toward funding our fall campaign headquarters.

To reserve a place, please send a check for \$40 per adult to:

CADC

PO Box 2723

Alameda, CA 94501

For more information, call Johanne Duffy at (510) 523-3827.

You can help make this a huge success. Invite your friends to join you for this special afternoon.

Upcoming

Events

June 21 and 22 — American Cancer Society Relay for Life at Encinal High School

July 9 — Regular monthly club meeting.

Aug. 25-28 — Democratic National Convention, Denver

Celebrate July Fourth the old-fashioned way

Every year the City of Alameda Democratic Club assembles a float for the Mayor's Fourth of July Parade. All club members — heck, all island Democrats — are welcome to ride on the float.

This year, although all details are not finalized, we may have the services of a professional designer to decorate our float. Stay tuned for more details at the June 11 club meeting.

Minutes of May 14 meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm. April minutes were approved.

Richard Hofmann said he needs people to register voters at festivals on July 26 and 27 and Sept. 13 and 14. Times are 10 am to 5 pm each day.

Also mentioned that Lyndon LaRouche candidates are running for Democratic Central Committee. Members advised not to vote for Stewart, Overton, Teng, Bravo, Craig or Deviston..

For Fourth of July parade, we have truck and need volunteers to help decorate.

Unanimously endorsed for the June 3 primary: Congressman Pete Stark (unopposed), Assemblyman Sandre Swanson (unopposed), and for the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee, Jim Oddie, Mark Briggs, Sumi Paranjape, Wayne Nishioka and Howard Egerman.

David Bacon, a journalist and photographer, was our speaker. He was a union organizer early on in Silicon Valley. His views on immigration:

- Trade agreements help corporations, not workers
- NAFTA problem: subsidies not allowed in Mexico
- Globalization produces migration; rich countries need poor immigrants
- Solution is to change NAFTA so farmers don't have to leave Mexico to support their families
- We have a growing group of people in US — undocumented workers — who have no rights and are penalized by their employers

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan C. Robinson, Secretary

Any material to be considered
for inclusion in the newsletter

MUST be submitted to lcdennis50@earthlink.net
or mailed to 3104 El Paseo, Alameda 94502
14 days before the next monthly meeting



A visitor from Ireland drops in at club meeting

Gerry Butler, an Alameda resident of 35 years and an early member of the City of Alameda Democratic Club, attended the May 14 meeting of the club while on a visit to the Bay Area.

He was enthusiastically greeted by some old friends.

Butler, originally from Ireland, decided to retire in his birthplace and moved to Ireland 10 years ago.

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Opinions and editorials

Billions for war, but nothing to improve healthcare

By Norman Solomon

It's kind of logical. In a pathological way.

A country that devotes a vast array of resources to killing capabilities will steadily undermine its potential for healing. For social justice. For healthcare as a human right.

Martin Luther King Jr. described the horrific trendline four decades ago: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

If a society keeps approaching spiritual death, it's apt to arrive. Here's an indicator: Nearly one in six Americans has no health insurance, and tens of millions of others are badly underinsured. Here's another: The United States, the world's pre-eminent warfare state, now spends about \$2 billion a day on military pursuits.

Gaining healthcare for all will require overcoming the priorities of the warfare state. That's the genuine logic behind the new "Healthcare NOT Warfare" campaign.

I remember the ferocious media debate over the proper government role in healthcare — 43 years ago. As spring of 1965 got underway, the bombast was splattering across front pages and flying through airwaves. Many commentators warned that a proposal for a vast new program would bring "socialism" and destroy the sanctity of the free-enterprise system. The new federal program was called Medicare.

These days, when speaking on campuses, I bring up current proposals for a "single payer" system — in effect, Medicare for Americans of all ages. Most students seem to think it's a good idea. But once in a while, someone vocally objects that such an arrangement would be "socialism." The objection takes me back to the media uproar of early 1965.

Today we're left with the unfulfilled potential of Medicare for all. It could make healthcare real as a human right. And it could spare our society a massive amount of money now going to administrative costs and corporate gouging. At last count

annual insurance-industry profits reached \$57.5 billion in 2006.

On Capitol Hill, lobbyists for the corporate profiteers are determined to block HR 676, the bill to create a universal single-payer system to implement healthcare as a human right.

In the current president campaign, none of the major candidates can be heard raising the possibility of ejecting the gargantuan insurance industry from the nation's healthcare system. Instead there's plenty of nattering about whether "mandates" are a good idea. Hillary Clinton even had the audacity (not of hope but of duplicity) to equate proposed healthcare "mandates" with the must-pay-in requirements that sustain Social Security and Medicare.

For Clinton's analogy to make sense, we'd have to accept the idea that requiring everyone to pay taxes to the government for a common-good program is akin to requiring everyone to pay premiums to private insurance companies for personal medical coverage.

A recent New York Times story was authoritative as it plied the conventional media wisdom. The lead sentence declared that an "immediate challenge that will confront the next administration" is the matter of "how to tame the soaring costs of Medicare and Medicaid." And the news article pointedly noted that current federal spending for those federal health-related programs adds up to \$627 billion.

I've been waiting for a New York Times news story to declare that an immediate challenge for the next administration will be the matter of how to tame the soaring costs of the Pentagon. After all, the government's annual military spending — when you factor in the supplemental bills for war fare for Afghanistan and Iraq — is well above the \$627 billion for Medicare and Medicaid that can cause such alarm in the upper reaches of the nation's media establishment.

Assessing the current presidential race, the Times reported: "The Democrats do not say, in any detail, how they would slow the growth of Medicare and Medicaid or what they think about the main policy options: rationing care, raising taxes, cutting payments to providers or requiring beneficiaries to pay more." There are other "policy options" —including drastic cuts in the Pentagon budget. And healthcare for all.

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Address Correction Requested

Phone: 510-522-DEM1

Website: www.alameda-demo.org

Address Label

Food Bank could use your help

The Alameda Food Bank, which expects to serve 1500 households this year, is finding increased demand both from folks on fixed incomes and those who have lost jobs.

Donations are always needed. Especially useful are: rice, canned fruit, tuna, canned beef stew, canned chili and canned corn. Donations are accepted at Alameda Marketplace, Alameda Towne Centre, Crosstown Coffeehouse and APT.

“The reality of this race is the Republican Party brand is very, very badly damaged, and in some places broken. We’ve lost Congressional seats in districts that have elected only Republicans for a generation. ”
- Steve Schmidt, senior advisor to Sen. John McCain

A chance to have a say in party policy

This is from club member Mark Briggs:

The executive board of the California Democratic Party is holding a weekend meeting June 13-15 at the Westin Hotel San Francisco Airport. They will be voting on Democratic National Committee delegates for the term 2008-2012.

The current delegates (all running for re-election) are: Rachel Binah, Mary Ellen Early, Inola Henry, Alice Huffman, Aleita Hugenin, Carole Migden, Christine Pelosi, Alicia Wang, Maxine Waters, Rosalind Wyman, Steven Alari, Ed Espinoza, Bob Mulholland, John Perez, Robert Rankin, Garry Shay, Christopher Stampolis, Keith Umemoto and Steven Ybarra.

Challengers include: Mal Bernstein, Joel Fried, Ralph Miller, Andrew Lachman, Mayme Hubert, Norman Solomon, Steve Young, Jo Olson, Ahjamu Makalani and Brad Parker.

Mark says only executive board members may vote, but any concerned Democrat may attend Friday evening and Saturday caucus meetings and lobby for or against delegates.