

DEMOCRATIC DIRECTIONS

CITY OF ALAMEDA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

MARCH 2009

10 things you should know about Obama's plan (from Move-on.com)

Makes a \$634 billion down payment on fixing health care that will go a long way toward paying for a more efficient, more affordable health care system that covers every single American.

Reduces taxes for 95% of working Americans. And if your family makes less than \$250,000, your taxes won't go up one dime.

Invests more than \$100 billion in clean energy technology, creating millions of green jobs that can never be outsourced.

Brings our troops home from Iraq on a firm timetable, finally bringing the war to a close—and freeing up almost ten billion dollars a month for domestic priorities.

Reverses growing income inequality. The plan lets the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans expire and focuses on strengthening the middle class.

Closes multi-billion-dollar tax loopholes for big oil companies.

Increases grants to help families pay for college—the largest increase ever.

Halves the deficit by 2013. President Obama inherited a legacy of huge deficits and an economy in shambles, but his plan brings the deficit under control as soon as the economy begins to recover.

Dramatically increases funding for the SEC and the CFTC—the agencies that police Wall Street.

Tells it straight. For years, budgets have used accounting tricks to hide the real costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush tax cuts, and too many other programs. Obama's budget gets rid of the smokescreens and lays out what America's priorities are, what they cost, and how we're going to pay for them.¹²

This is the change we voted for. President Obama has done his part, now we need to do ours.

And More than 10

Stops unnecessary government subsidies to big banks, health insurance companies and big agribusinesses.

Expands access to early childhood education and improves schools by investing in programs that make sure every child has a qualified, strong teacher.

Negotiates for better prescription drug prices using Medicaid's tremendous bargaining power.

Expands access to family planning for low-income women.

Caps the pollution that causes global warming, and makes polluters pay to support clean energy innovation.

MARCH MEETING

The guest speaker at the Alameda Democratic Club's March 11 meeting will address one of the city's key developmental issues: Alameda Point, the Plan for Alameda's West End. Pat Keliher is VP-Operations for SunCal Companies, the Alameda Point master developer. In his current role, responsibilities include community and political outreach, project planning, entitlements, and fiscal responsibilities for the Alameda Point project

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February 12, 2009 Minutes

Welcome and Announcements: Co-President – Jim Oddie

New Birth of Freedom – A poem written and performed by Teasha Gable

Report on Stimulus Information House Party – February 7, 2009

Sponsored by: Alameda Democratic Club at the home of its member, Alice Fried.

29 Alameda residents came and learned what's in the economic stimulus plan and how it affects them. In compliance with Obama's call to activism: *We are the change we've been waiting for*, this was the first event to fulfill the Alameda Democratic Club's commitment to keep the pressure on elected officials to provide the change we voted for by keeping voters informed and engaged.

Guest Speaker: John Diaz, Editorial Page Editor, San Francisco Chronicle

Mr. Diaz, an Alameda resident, a Humboldt State University graduate, is a frequent commentator on local and national television news programs, including the *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. He's worked for the *Red Bluff Daily News*, the *Denver Post*, the Associated Press Bureau in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and has covered Congress and the White House.

Talk Highlights

State of Newspaper Business

The newspaper business is not going well.

"Last year the *Chronicle* lost \$50 M. Advertising revenue is down," Mr. Diaz said.

He explained how journalism that is well done is not cost effective citing the amount of time and bodies to do research and the loss of subscribers and advertising when institutions are taken to task as the highest-cost components.

To offset this downturn, the paper has raised prices; re-designed to a smaller publication to cut down on paper costs; is schooling readers on what's involved in producing a newspaper; considering becoming a non-profit. Also, exploring grants that are being offered to do specific reporting such as on health care, education, etc. "But I'm opposed to this type of lobbying," Mr. Diaz stated. "Presents a conflict of interest with real journalism."

The paper is also investing in the Newspapers and Education Program. This concept of giving newspapers to schools for reading and writing projects is expected to expand the papers readership to younger readers who get their news from the internet, another significant cause for the decline in newspaper sales.

Government Coverage

Mr. Diaz noted that issues and policies that come before the California State legislature are hashed out behind closed doors with the Big Five, the Governor and the Senate and Assembly leaders of both parties before being brought to the complete body for a vote. "This is the wrong process," Diaz said.

Then there are the "no"-vote legislators. These are elected officers who show or not, but who do not take a stand on behalf of voters. This practice has become prevalent since California adopted term limits. Mr. Diaz said legislators who don't have voter confidence, feel less secure and vulnerable, therefore cast these "no" votes.

"What then will it take for us, activists, to get through to our leaders," asked someone in the audience.

"Email," Mr. Diaz said. "Email is more effective than phone calls."

A Tender Moment

A gentleman in the audience took the opportunity to express thanks to Mr. Diaz for the editorial he wrote a few years ago on mental illness that impacted mental illness legislation that enabled his daughter to survive and thrive.

What a tribute to the power of the written opinion and the importance of that forum in newspapers.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by: Alice Fried, Secretary, Alameda Democratic Club

Editors note: Mark Briggs is an active Democrat Check out this column—which he promises to produce monthly—and go to the blog which he developed, www.acdc-issues.blogspot.com to have your say. You do not have to wait for the next meeting to let the club in on your concerns

Hot Topics

Hi folks! This is my first column and so as to start out on the right foot (or would that be left foot?) I want to try to begin outlining what's before us and how we might act or react to the various issues. There is a lot going on just now so I'll take each item in order of immediacy. Our blog, We've Got Issues, is built.(1) You can go there to discuss, well, anything that you desire. On topic is not a must. Please remark on how you like, or don't, the site and what you'd like to see and have as features.

The first item concerns our elected officials and how we feel about how well they perform at their jobs. There is a new organization called Accountability Now Pac(2) which will attempt to hold our office holder's feet to the fire" primarily by threatening to put a new candidate against them in a coming primary.

A little less harsh is a new program organized by our state party's Progressive Caucus which is tracking legislation in our state and which will attempt to lobby, persuade, and/or coerce elected officials to vote one way or the other on various legislation. I am the local liaison for this process. First on our plate is health care reform within the state. Mark Leno is carrying and new version of the single payer bill(3) from committee to the senate. So, the point in bring all of this up, is whether we'd like to do something similar? We could focus on city and/or county issues? Please discuss at the blog.

Next, we have the coming CDC convention in Sacramento from April 24 to 26. I will be attending with fellow 16th AD delegate Alice Freid, Rob Bonta (Mary Hayashi appointee), Barbara Kahn and Jim Oddie (Pete Stark appointees), and Dan Wood (Sandre Swanson appointee). You can see that we are well represented. If any member of the club would like to submit a resolution for the convention, please contact me for the proper format and process. Also, the party is calling for volunteers(4) and you can also go as an observer (Contact me for a form. Cost is \$120 plus meals if desired). Of course, the caucuses are always open to all democrats and you may join any state party caucus.

The may 19th ballot will have at least 7 propositions. We need to start looking at the various initiatives and the club will address this need. Look here(5) for the propositions. Please discuss this at the blog.

Man, what a full plate. Yet, I would ask every club member to think about joining in with the greening of Chipman School. Ask Barbara for advice.

You Democrats are awesome!

Mark

Issues Chair

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(1) www.acdc-issues.blogspot.com (2) <http://accountabilitynowpac.com/> (3) <http://singlepayernow.net/>

(4)

http://www.cadem.org/site/c.jrLZK2PyHmF/b.4953611/k.28CC/2009_Convention_Volunteer/apps/ka/ct/contactcustom.asp(5) http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_j.htm

GETTING TO KNOW OUR MEMBERS

Editors note: We are a diverse and growing club. The following two articles feature two members who bring us some of this diversity. **Cecelia Valdez**, no longer a resident of our city but who still stays in touch with us, cut her political teeth in our club, went on to organize a club in her new community and from there, ran and won a seat on her city council. Truly a grass roots story. **Alice Fried** first found us through our headquarters and campaign during the election season. Alice, as is her wont, jumped in with both feet and filled in where needed, and went on to organize the participation of the high school youth in our efforts—an ongoing campaign to bring more young people into the political process.

By email from **Virginia**

If you have a story to share, or if you want the editor to chase someone down, contact Barbara Kahn, editor at Barbarakahn8@gmail.com or at 510-865-1341

Cecilia Valdez Learns Her Lessons Well

Even though I now live in San Pablo, Alameda holds a strong place in my heart. This is where I learned about politics.

I remember the first week of August 2000 when I moved to Alameda. I was taking the O bus line and getting off on Santa Clara Avenue. After several days I looked to my left and saw a huge sign that said "Alameda Democratic Club." I went straight to it and joined the club.

Soon I was phone banking, doing whatever was needed to be done and loving every minute of it. I had Barbara, Jane, Norma, Sylvia and many others mentoring me. The Oddies were running the show.

When I moved to San Pablo in 2003, I vowed to keep coming back; but soon I was up to my eyebrows in community work, and democratic club organizing. Whenever a question came up about how to do things, I always said, "That's not the way they do it in Alameda."

I learned about precinct walking, phone banking, making signs for 4th of July Parades, and just plain politicking in Alameda. I learned that when I was stuck for how to do certain things, I just kept on going and it seemed to work out. That was a lesson I learned from Barbara Kahn. She was never at a loss for how to get things done.

And how about voter registration? Richard Hoffman certainly knows a thing or two about that. He was always willing to share with me how best to do it.

Sylvia Blumberg and I took our turn being hospitality hostesses, making cookies and coffee for our meetings. I hope that we did a good job. I know she did.

I learned from all of you what it means to be a good democratic club member. All those lessons served me well. Last November I was elected to the San Pablo City Council. Now I am up to my eyebrows in orientation sessions and meetings and loving every minute of it.

Please know that I always appreciated your taking the time to teach me. I learned to love participating and working together for a cause and making great friends along the way. Thank you all for everything. Please call me anytime. 510 215-5780

Cecilia Valdez
San Pablo City Councilmember

By email from Virginia who sparked the Obama campaign in Alameda and has relocated to the State of Washington

Hi most active Alameda Democratic Club, I hope you're doing great! Thought I'd pass on what the Repugs are planning for 2010. I personally think they'll be more and more marginalized the more of their "grassroots" gets online with their hate/racism, but it makes a strong argument for our clubs staying visibly active all year. Are you having any luck convincing the Club to open a space to work and coordinate volunteer activities all year?

My new island (Bainbridge) is so laid back, it'll take me a while to light the fire! Miss you. Be marvelous.

HEAD POWER By Alice Wilson-Fried

The newly elected RNC head, Michael Steele, is reported to have said, “The Democrats have let power go to their heads.” Head-power. Sounds good to me, and it’s about time. It’s also high time we the people, let the power Obama’s election unleashed in us go to our heads as well.

Voters appreciate the hand of bipartisanship the president extended to the Republicans to get us out of the country’s economic crisis. And thanks to the media, we heard what the Republicans had to say about the economic plan the Democratic majority put forth: Eliminate help for veterans. No need to invest in education, (our kids’ futures). Government should not be involved in Health Care. Cut funding for re-building infrastructure and put more into tax cuts that will trickle down into the economy. What’s changed?

Voters. Voters woke up from a long nap of apathy and voted to follow a different path. They voted to take the route Obama mapped out in his campaign. They want jobs now, affordable health care, education and a green future for our kids and grandkids. They want leadership that respects their headiness instead of preying on their pettiness.

Too much spending, Congress complained about the stimulus bill. Senator McCain called it “generational theft” stating that we will be robbing our children if we raise the deficit. How can Americans wrap their brain around that when the Republican-run administration led them into the wrong war and mortgaged away the country’s wealth, reputation, and the ability to look past the moment to prepare for its future in order to pay for it? Voters get it that the stimulus bill will have a big price tag. But so is the huge hole the country has fallen into. The Republican solution, more tax cuts. Americans cannot expect different results using that same old short-sighted strategy.

The slapping away of the president’s extended hand of bipartisanship is proof that change will not come easy. Simply put, there are those in Washington who believe everyone should eat and others who appear not to care. But American voters do care. American voters know that a thriving economy, like a skyscraper, is built on a strong foundation—a working, spending middle class.

Needless to say, changing the tone in Washington is a monumental task that the president we elected cannot do alone. He needs our help despite the change mandate of our vote on November 4, 2008. The election may be over, but voters must keep the pressure on so that President Obama can deliver on that mandate. His change formula--Inspire + Solution + Action = Change, is at a crossroad. Heed Obama’s words—we are the change we’ve been looking for and do not allow Republican conflict of interest and the media’s hunt for ratings with its 100-day political analysis, convolute the President’s act-for-the-urgency-of-now-and-prepare-for-the-future vision he outlined on the campaign trail. The vision we voted for:

Investment in infrastructure. It’ll give people jobs and help cities and states balance their budgets now.
Education overhaul. Too many jobs and opportunities are shipped overseas because we lack a well-trained and/or technologically savvy labor pool.
Turn the country green. Manufacturing and energy self-reliance will keep America safe and prosperous.
Tax cuts for the middle class and small businesses. The economy started to crumble when the rich got all the breaks.
Make health care affordable and accessible. Let’s face it, the less an individual spends on this, a basic right, the more he/she can spend in a capitalistic economy.

Get our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

What should voters do? Remind Congress as well as the White House, that we supported that vision with our votes. Write to them. Call them. Email them. Write letters to editors, comments on media websites. Twitter. Blog. Facebook. YouTube. Hold meetings, rallies. Let them know that we are not going to hand our country over to those with the loudest voices, but the ones with the clearest heads. Make it clear to them that we want recovery that recognizes the pitfalls of greed and short-sightedness, yet focuses on short-term achievable goals and their obstacles. And we want the economic stimulus and social benefits that Obama’s long-term vision promises.

Prove the new RNC chair, Mr. Steele, right. Thinking + common sense = head-power. That’s the genie Obama’s election let out of the bottle. That’s the power that fueled the people’s vote for change. That’s the power that most Americans expect the Democrats to exert. The party of ideology and ego-power has taken our country down. It’s time to change direction. To do that, Americans not only want, but deserve leaders who use their heads and hearts to guide the way.

CITY OF ALAMEDA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 2723, Alameda, CA 94501
Hotline: 510-522-3361

NEW MEMBER OR RENEWAL APPLICATION

Membership Dues:

Seniors/Youth	\$15.00
Senior Couple	\$25.00
Individual	\$20.00
Couple/Family	\$30.00

Please make checks payable to: City of Alameda Democratic Club or CADC

Please print all information.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

I want to receive the monthly newsletter via _____ email or _____ snail mail.

As a member, I am willing to help with the following:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| _____ Registering Voters | _____ Making Phone Calls |
| _____ Assisting in Fund-Raising Events | _____ Other Fund-Raising Needs |
| _____ Attending Support Rallies | _____ Hosting Demo Get Togethers |
| _____ Other Activity: _____ | |

Signature

Date

The City of Alameda Democratic Club meets the second Wednesday of each month (except in December) at 7:00 p.m. at the Alameda Hospital, Clinton & Willow Streets, Alameda.