

SAN RAMON VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Newsletter: September / October 2011

October Meeting: Thursday, October 27, 2010, 6:15 pm at Crow Canyon Country Club

Topic: "From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks" and "To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine."

Speaker: Ian Ruskin- Award Winning Bay Area Actor

Ian trained at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. In England, he worked in Repertory Theater, London's West End (where work included the title role in Jack the Ripper), television (including the Laurence Olivier King Lear), and film. He has performed his one-man play "From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks" nearly 200 times to about 50,000 people across America and in Canada, Hawai'i, England and Australia. Legendary filmmaker Haskell Wexler filmed a live performance at the Warner Grand Theater, San Pedro in front of 1000 people. It aired on PBS in 2009/2010, presenting the story to 150 million people..

"To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine" challenges many of the perceptions and assumptions about Paine and throw new light on the birth of America, as well as on the French Revolution and the Age of Reason. Thomas Paine was the one truly radical Founding Father of America, a man who changed the face of the world through his writings. "Common Sense" inspired the American Revolution, "Rights of Man" defined the French Revolution, and then "The Age of Reason" called on us to use our ability to reason as the basis for our beliefs and morality.

Ian Ruskin will perform parts of each of these plays and talk about their meaning to today's America

Our second speaker is: Mary Perez- Founder Christmas for Everyone

Twenty-six years ago, Mary had an idea; "Why not fix a Christmas dinner and provide some gifts to those less fortunate in our community." The first Christmas for Everyone served meals to 250 people and made sure each person left with a warm blanket or coat. Last year my wife and I volunteered as servers where over 2700 people were provided with a Christmas dinner, a warm coat and a present for each child. Mary will tell us more about how her original idea developed over the years to serve so many needy in our community.

I'm asking that everyone who attends this meeting to bring either a nice warm blanket or coat to donate to this worthy local charity.

Dinner is \$25 per person for members and their invited guests, \$30 for others.

RSVP: Mail checks, made out to Jim Donnelly, to 373 Century Circle, Danville, CA 94526

Or call him at (925) 570-9289

Please RSVP no later than Monday, October 24, 2011.

Note: If you RSVP and no-show, you will be billed for the meal.

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Presidents Corner

First off I would like to thank all of you who attended our annual Bar-B-Que last month. By my count we had over 60 attendees including Congressman George Miller and Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan. Barney & Peggy were thrilled with the certificate of appreciation presented to them on behalf of Congressman Jerry McNerney and State Senator Mark DeSaulnier/Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the food I enjoyed preparing. The margaritas must have been good since we consumed an entire cooler of them. Photos from the Bar-B-Que are posted on our website; srvdems.org

I also want to thank those of you who attended our August dinner meeting. I received a lot of positive feedback about both of the Speakers. One issue I must raise is that if you RSVP for a dinner meeting and do not show up we will send you a bill for the dinners we had to pay for. We had a number of no-shows at the August meeting and it cost the club over \$100. Please, if you RSVP for the dinner be sure to attend.

Phil O'Loane is running for city council and Carol Rowley is running for mayor of San Ramon. Both of these Democrats have asked for our support and with our help can win these races. It is time for San Ramon to get some new thinking in their city government.. Please contact Phil at a philoloane321@gmail.com and Carol at caroljrowley@yahoo.com to offer your support in anyway that you can.

I must apologize for having to combine our September and October Newsletter into a signal issue. From out of nowhere, after I got back for my vacation in Alaska in late August, I have been buried in work. On top of that I am leaving on Saturday to visit my daughter and friends in Denmark, and to do a little fishing. I return on October 25, just in time to finalize the count for our October meeting. Speaking of which, I believe this our last dinner meeting of the year, will be one of our most entertaining and informative dinners of the year.

I have watched "From Warf Rats to Lords of the Docks" a number of times and always come away with new understanding of what my relatives went through in the west coast labor struggles as they helped build the International Longshore-Warehousemen's Union in the 1930's, 40's and 50's. I have also read a bit about Thomas Paine and find him one of our more interesting founding fathers. In my opinion, today more than ever, we need more men like Thomas Paine and Harry Bridges to fight for the common man and ensure a strong middle class for the future our country. As someone who has lived and worked in a number of countries where the middle class is non-existent, or nearly so, I fear for the direction our country is heading. How can one think that it is acceptable for society to have the richest 1% of the population earn more the bottom 50%? We need major changes to our tax system and to how we spend our wealth.

Today I attended a luncheon where Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan was the speaker. She talked, in depth, about our current situation in California and what it means for our children' and grandchildren's future. We have a severely broken system in California that if it does change in a meaningful way soon will be bankrupt. We are not paying to maintain our infrastructure or to properly educate our children for the future. As she stated, Governor's Warren and Pat Brown got it. Build good roads and other infrastructure, support our schools at about the highest level in the country and you will attract the best companies with the best paying jobs for our citizens. All of us in my generation are beneficiaries of those policies and, in my opinion it is our duty to push to have the same for our children. Think about this, if we maintain our roads during the first 80% of their life the relative cost is \$1. If we wait to maintain them during the last 20% of their life the relative cost is \$6. I mean it is a simple concept; it is much easier to repair a bridge before it falls down. Why is it that enough of our legislators and their supporters cannot grasp this and continue to push us toward a failed state?

On a more positive note for the future, they finished installing my solar system toady and even with the rain I got to see my electric meter red zero kilowatt hours. It is a comforting feeling to me to know that at least a good portion of my electricity is being generated from a renewable resource.

"I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death." --Thomas Paine

Have a good month.

Regards,

Jim Donnelly
President, SRVDC

New SRVDC Website

Just a reminder that our new website <http://srvdems.org/> is now up and running thanks to the efforts of Brodie Hilp our Vice President. Visit it to see upcoming events and to learn more about the activities of the club. Your comments on our web site, both positive and constructive, are appreciated. Let us know what additional information you would like to see included on the site.

Member Editorials

Each month we invite you to present your views on about any subject you wish to discuss. This is an important way to understand what are major concerns for our members. Surely there are things going on that make your blood boil. Let it out, express your opinions here.

Reclaim Democracy To The Majority

Our country appears “broken”. We can’t fix decaying roads and bridges, maintain or keep open our parks; our schools are deteriorating and our students are falling behind other nations’ kids. Veterans return to join the ranks of the homeless, unemployment grows as do foreclosures. Small businesses are closing while large corporations amass record wealth for their top executives and export jobs to developing countries.

Republican legislators succumb to the threats and fanaticism of the Tea Partiers, acting as pawns for wealthy benefactors. Offering nothing but more pollution, cuts to our safety nets and greater tax breaks for the wealthy, corporate interests try to persuade us that jobs will trickle down to the unemployed, and living standards will rise for the employed. But, cuts in social programs and tax cuts for the wealthy have only made economic recovery stagnant or worsen. Even some Democrats, fearing loss of their next election, bow to these manipulators who may turn off their campaign contributions.

We need to focus on winning back our majoritarian Democracy by electing more Progressives and giving support to our regular Democrats. To do that, they need to know that we have their backs. We have to give them the confidence that ***IF*** they fight for us – the Majority – we can and will win. Then, our legislators can maintain, restore and build upon those things we cherish. Our Democracy was and is founded upon 50%+1, ***NOT*** 33&1/3%+1 ! Only then will we have a nation by, for and of the ***People***.

Tony Suh

Sent to the Bay Area News Group for the Contra Costa Times and/or Lamorinda Sun

Reports from our Elected Officials

Congressman Jerry McNerney

Congressman McNerney Fights For The Delta Region

Oct. 4, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) continued the charge against a new canal that would take water out of the Delta region. Joined by Representatives Mike Thompson, George Miller, Doris Matsui, and John Garamendi, Congressman McNerney met with Jerry Meral, the Deputy Secretary of the California Natural Resource Agency to express his grave concern over any Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) that would adversely affect the Delta Region. Meral is the senior state official who oversees the BDCP.

"I will continue to be a strong advocate for the people of the entire Delta region to ensure that the water resources and their quality remain in place," said Congressman McNerney. "Steps must be taken now to ensure that the BDCP serves the best interests of our region, and I insisted that the voice of the Delta be heard."

Since 2007, Rep. McNerney has spearheaded the fight against a new conveyance system-- such as a peripheral canal or tunnel-- that would take large amounts of water from the Delta. Last month, he sent a letter to the Department of the Interior insisting that the final BDCP benefit the Delta region. The letter strongly opposed any aggressive measures that would adversely affect the Delta.

"Agriculture is the life blood of the Delta region, and I will fight to protect the livelihood of our farmers, families and small businesses. I thank my colleagues in the region for once again joining me in fighting for the well-being of the people in the San Joaquin Delta region," said Rep. McNerney. "As I made clear to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan officials, we will not accept a new canal that does not have the buy in of the Delta communities."

Representatives Miller and Thompson echoed McNerney's dedication to fighting for the residents of the Delta region:

"Needlessly rushing the scientific review of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan is simply irresponsible, and that is what I told the Bay Delta Conservation Plan officials today," said Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-01). "We know all-too-well the consequences of bad water policy combined with impractical deadlines. In Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, expedited review of

the Klamath River project resulted in the death of 68,000 Chinook Salmon. Are we really considering walking down the same road again? We need sound, science-based solutions that don't harm our wildlife or environment."

"This was a much-needed meeting, but it doesn't yet solve the problem. We are very concerned that Bay-Delta interests are not being treated as equal partners – despite clear direction from the state legislature that a restored Bay-Delta and a reliable water supply must be co-equal goals. The state of California, the federal agencies, and the exporters who are seeking the Bay-Delta's water have stumbled badly over the way that this Bay-Delta Conservation Plan is being put together -- behind closed doors, and without full and fair participation," said Rep. George Miller (CA-07).

Congressman George Miller

Miller Requests Immediate Hearings on Job Creation Proposals

September 9, 2011
The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

Last night before a Joint Session of Congress, President Obama proposed the American Jobs Act, a package of proposals to create jobs immediately and spur future economic growth. Given the urgency of our nation's job situation and since the House Education and the Workforce Committee has jurisdiction over a number of the proposals in this plan, I respectfully request that you immediately schedule committee hearings on these important initiatives outlined by President Obama.

During the recent August recess, Members heard from their constituents. The message was loud and clear. The American people share the President's sense of urgency that Congress must act together and act quickly to create jobs.

Economists agree that creating jobs is the first, most important step we need to take to grow the economy, reduce the deficit, and keep Americans working. Creating jobs now is the key to fixing nearly every other economic problem America faces today.

Businesses have repeatedly pointed out that their hiring has stalled for lack of demand. By taking measures to directly put more Americans back to work, we grow demand. Workers are consumers.

As you know, in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, the country's unemployment situation is in dire need of attention. With more than 14 million Americans officially out of work, unemployment remains above 9 percent. A staggering 6.2 million Americans have been unemployed for more than 6 months. This long-term unemployment threatens to knock these workers permanently out of the middle class. Some sectors have been hurt worse than others. The construction industry's nationwide unemployment rate stands in

double digits. Public service jobs, like teachers, firefighters, and police, continue to suffer from the downturn and its impact on state and local budgets. Just this summer, 85,000 school personnel received pink slips, bringing the total of education workers losing their jobs since September 2008 to 290,000. Those job losses result in larger class sizes, not to mention damaging pauses in teaching careers we should be nurturing.

The President proposed several items within our Committee's jurisdiction that can save and create jobs now and help the unemployed find work. Some significant measures in our jurisdiction include:

- A school modernization program, benefiting at least 35,000 public schools, would put construction workers to work repairing schools, upgrading science labs, and making classrooms internet-ready. A portion of this program would be used for modernizing facilities in our nation's critical community college system.
- Education jobs funding would stop the layoffs of 280,000 teachers and support the hiring of tens of thousands more.
- An employment law reform would prohibit employers from discriminating against unemployed workers when hiring.
- A Pathways Back to Work fund for low-income individuals would provide for subsidized employment, support for innovative training programs, including at community colleges, and summer and year-round job opportunities for youth.
- The long-term unemployed can benefit from measures to improve reemployment assistance, and work-share proposals intend to save the jobs of workers who would otherwise be laid off.

The President's proposals have enjoyed bipartisan support in the past. For example, you have long called for reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. We should act on reauthorization and reinvigorate reemployment assistance and job training efforts. The important question is whether this Congress can work together with our President to help start creating jobs now. Congress must put partisanship aside and seize this moment to move our economy forward. It is well past time for this Congress to refocus on jobs and take action to grow and strengthen America's middle class. The President's plan deserves to be heard. Our Committee should schedule hearings on his proposals as soon as possible. I look forward to hearing from you on how our Committee will respond to the President's call to action and to working with you on these matters.

Sincerely,
GEORGE MILLER
Senior Democratic Member

Congressman John Garamendi

Rep. Garamendi Rejects House Republican Chair's Defeatist Statement that "America Can't Compete with China" In Clean Energy Race

October 5, 2011 2:05 PM

Garamendi Continues to Push Make It In America Jobs Agenda

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman John Garamendi (D-Fairfield, CA), the author of Make It In America legislation that would create jobs and help America compete in the modern Clean Energy Race, today rejected [the suggestion by the Republican House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chairman Cliff Stearns](#) that "we can't compete with China to make solar panels and wind turbines."

"Every great jobs-creating technological advancement in American history – cars, space travel, and the Internet included – were rebuffed by naysayers that preferred to raise the white flag of surrender before even trying," **Congressman Garamendi said**. "The solar industry was born in America and is responsible for 100,000 American jobs. With commonsense policies like Make It In America buying preferences, we can do much to once again become the world's leader in solar production."

Garamendi added, "The America I know and love is not a nation of quitters. Some say we can't afford to compete with China; I say we can't afford to surrender to China or any other nation. And we certainly can't afford to continue relying on dirty fossil fuels from countries that don't share our priorities or values."

Congressman Garamendi is the author of [the Manufacture Renewable Energy Systems: Make it in America Act \(H.R. 487\)](#), which would create American jobs by ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent on American-made renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, geothermal, and biofuels. Phased over a four year period, the bill requires the federal government and any state government buying renewable technologies with federal funds to purchase renewable sources of energy grown, produced, or manufactured with 100% American content. It also requires any company taking advantage of the Investment Tax Credit and the Production Tax Credit to buy 100% American content within four years after the bill becomes law.

As a California state legislator in the 1970s, Garamendi also authored the first state clean energy tax credit in the nation, which was directly responsible for wind energy production in the Altamont Pass near Livermore and the Montezuma Hills near Fairfield.

State Senator Mark DeSaulnier

DeSaulnier's Jobs Bill Approved by Legislature

Friday, September 09, 2011

Senate Bill 734 (DeSaulnier) Supports Job Training of California Job Seekers

SB 734 (DeSaulnier) was approved today by the Assembly with a 49-27 vote and by the Senate with a 25-15 vote. The measure prioritizes the spending of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) money for quality job training programs and services for unemployed workers.

"Workers in California face the toughest job crisis since the Great Depression," said DeSaulnier (D-Concord). "With declining state revenues and pressure on public resources, it is crucial that every dollar of federal workforce funds is invested in high quality job training that connects workers to good jobs."

California receives almost \$500 million annually in WIA dollars for job training and employment services for youth, disadvantaged adults, and dislocated workers. The majority of this money (85%) is allocated to 49 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) which develop policies for how local WIA dollars are invested.

Despite the need for targeted and effective training, local WIBs in California spend very little WIA funds on skills training. On average they invest just 20% of their federal funds on job training services. A third of them spend less than 11% on training and many invest nothing at

all. Faced with a similar problem, other states, including Florida, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, have all adopted policies that require more local WIA funds to be dedicated to training. For example, Florida requires that local WIBs spend at least 50% of their WIA funds on training.

SB 734 requires local WIBs to increase spending of their Adult and Dislocated Workers Fund on quality programs and services that provide workers with job training. Under this bill, spending would increase annually to a minimum of 30% of the Fund in 2016 and thereafter.

SB 734 is supported by and co-sponsored by the California Labor Federation, California Manufacturers and Technology Association, and State Building and Construction Trades Council. The bill will be sent next to the Governor for consideration. He has until October 9th to act on this bill.

Assembly Woman Joan Buchanan

Buchanan Bond Initiatives Reform Bill Signed into Law by Governor

Tuesday, October 04 2011

(Sacramento, CA)— Assemblymember Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo) is pleased to announce that Governor Brown has signed Assembly Bill 732 into law. The bill passed through both houses of the Legislature with unanimous support.

AB 732 requires an explanatory table, which will appear in the ballot pamphlet, summarizing the Legislative Analyst's estimate of the net state and local government fiscal impact of state-wide bond measures. The bill, which stems from a recommendation by the Little Hoover Commission, would provide additional clarity to voters on state-wide bond measures.

"The 2009 Little Hoover Report suggests improving the information given to voters in order to help them have a clearer picture of the implications of approving or rejecting a state bond measure. One specific recommendation is to "include in the voter guide an easy-to-read chart or report card developed by the Legislative Analyst's Office that assists voters in more completely understanding the fiscal context of and potential trade-offs that result from their decisions on the ballot," stated Buchanan.

"I believe that during such difficult fiscal times, voters need as much information as possible when voting on measures that will lead to decades of fiscal obligations," Buchanan continued. The Governor announced that he had signed AB 732 along with a group of reform bills all designed to "protect the state budget and strengthen fiscal stability in California."