

**San Ramon Valley Democratic Club**  
**Newsletter: February 2013**

[\(www.srvdems.org\)](http://www.srvdems.org)

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**Next Dinner Meeting: February 28:**

**Doug Offenhartz- Former Danville Mayor and Democratic Party Activist**

**TOPIC: Obama Campaign in Virginia**

Doug arrived in Danville in 1971 to head the start-up of the San Ramon Valley Community Center and, as its first staff member, worked with teenagers and community leaders to remodel the facility and initiate programs and activities.

In 1982, he was elected to Danville's first Town Council and served two terms, including one year as Mayor. He also served as an officer in the San Ramon Valley Democratic Club in the 1970s and 1980s and canvassed for many Democratic candidates, including Tom Torlakson, George Miller, Ron Dellums, Barbara Lee, and Jerry McNerney.

In the early 1990s, he organized and served as first president of the Tenth Congressional District Democratic Leadership Caucus, focused on ousting Congressman Bill Baker and eventually electing Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher in 1996. He served as the Tenth Congressional District Canvassing Chair for the Obama campaign in 2008, and canvassed on his behalf in Contra Costa County and Reno, Nevada, during the primary campaigns, and in Colorado Springs during the General Election. He also canvassed for the President's re-election in Spotsylvania, Virginia. He currently volunteers as an English tutor at Diablo Valley College and as a regional representative with the Brackett Foundation, supporting ethnic Burmese students pursue their education in Thailand.

**2nd SPEAKER: Anne Cavazos, Sustainable San Ramon**

As the Cofounder and President of Sustainable San Ramon, Anne will present Sustainable San Ramon's mission, vision, and plans for 2013 and beyond. She will also discuss ways that the community can be involved.

We look forward to seeing many of you there.

<b>Social Get together</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>6:45 PM</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>7:15 PM</b>

**Members & Invited Guests; \$25**

**Non-members: \$30** (\$25 for dinner and \$5 requested donation to help offset program costs)

**Presentation only \$5** (requested donation)

Please RSVP to me, via email or telephone (925) 570-9289, as early as possible for this event and **no later than Monday, February 25**. **Make checks out to James Donnelly** and mail them to the address below or bring them with you to the dinner.

## In this Issue

- President's Corner
- Membership Drive
- March Dinner Meeting
- Gun Control
- Member Editorials
- Reports from our Elected Officials
- Coming Events

## Presidents Corner

As I have been listening to the various debates going on about gun control, confirmation of Presidential appointments, the budget, sequestration, etc, I find myself getting more and more discouraged. It all seems to be just more of the same. The rightwing influence in the Republican congress just gets more and crazier. The Republicans in the Senate seem bound and determined to stop anything the President tries to do. It looks as though it is going to be another year of a completely dysfunctional congress and we the people will be the ones who suffer for it. Let us hope that our legislature in California, at least, is able to pass more much needed meaningful reforms to the way we do business in California.

The longer it takes the less likely it is that we will see and meaningful gun control legislation and truthfully I'm not sure what it is we should do. Banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines appears at first glance to be a step in the right direction. However, since there are so many already in circulation, it is a bit like closing the barn door after the horses are already out. Estimates are that we have about 80 guns for every 100 people in the U.S.

And none of this really addresses the deeper issues; Why is it so many people feel the need to carry a gun for protection, especially a semi-automatic rifle? Why is it easier to purchase and own a gun than an automobile? As least with an automobile we require the owners to show some knowledge of how to use it safely.

I am a gun owner and a former marine. I once belonged to the NRA. I know how to handle my weapon safely and keep it out of the hands of children. I do not advocate that all guns should be banned and I do not advocate that all people should carry guns. I do not want to live in a society where I feel that I must carry a gun for self-protection. I don't claim to know the answer to the issues surrounding gum ownership; but I do know that we need to have a responsible dialog about weapons and that we need to come up with some solutions to lessen the number of people who are killed each year with guns. We have more people killed by guns in the U.S. each year than we saw killed in the entire period we had soldiers in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

I heard a good quote last week from a person that was shot four times during the Virginia Tech shooting: "If having more guns makes us safer than we should be the safest country in the

world” We are number 1 in the world in gun ownership, Yemen is number 2 with about 57 guns per 100 people. Does what we are doing or where we seem to be going make any sense?

Brodie Hilp was kind enough to write our locally elected Democrats about their positions on gun control. See their responses below.

Have a good month!

Jim Donnelly- President SRVDC

**“They can take everything away from you, they can strip you naked, but they can’t take away what’s inside your brain.” (Harry Bridges)**

## Membership Drive

We have had some success this past month; however, we still are only at about 50 % of last year’s membership. Other than those who attended the January meeting very few others have renewed. We need your support. Please take the time to either fill in and mail in the form below or log on to our website [srvdems.org](http://srvdems.org) and go to the donations link.

It is time to renew your membership in the San Ramon Valley Democratic club. Dues are only \$25/person or \$40/family. These dues support us in presenting our programs throughout the year. Also, as this year is an election year we need your dues to help our local candidates in their efforts to get re-elected. The primary goal of the SRVDC is to aid in informing voters and concerned citizens about issues of the day and how they may impact our lives. The SRVDC serves the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville and San Ramon. We provide a vehicle for persons interested in your communities to come together for interesting and informative meetings about issues facing all of us. We provide a voter registration and information table at the Danville Farmer’s Market and other venues. We also send out a monthly newsletter presenting updates from our elected officials and provide a forum for our members to express their views.

We need your continued support for these efforts. Dues are \$25/ person and \$40 per family. Please complete the form below and mail it to address below:

Renewal or New Membership                      Singly or Family Membership

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the activities that interest you

\_\_\_\_ Voter Registration

\_\_\_\_ Fundraising

\_\_\_\_ Get-out-the-vote activities

\_\_\_\_ Publicity

\_\_\_\_ Local Government  
\_\_\_\_ Hospitality

\_\_\_\_ Newsletter  
\_\_\_\_ Programs & Functions

**Make checks payable to: San Ramon Valley Democratic Club  
P.O. Box 1218  
Danville, CA 94526**

Thanks.

Jim Donnelly

## **March 2013 Dinner Meeting**

Our March dinner meeting will be held at the Crow Canyon Country Club on Thursday, March 28, 2013. Our planned speakers are Congressman Eric Swalwell and Dublin Mayor Tim Sbranti..

## **Gun Control**

The issue of gun control has been receiving a lot of attention since the shootings in Sandy Hook last December. The question is "What will be done and what are our local elected officials' positions?" Brodie Hilp sent out the following questions to:

Congressman George Miller  
Congressman Eric Swalwell  
State Senator Mark DeSaulnier  
Assemblywomen Joan Buchanan  
Assemblywomen Susan Bonilla

To date, Eric and Susan have responded. Their responses are presented below and we hope that our other electeds will respond soon.

The San Ramon Valley Democratic Club considers gun control and safety to be one of the most important issues of our nation. Could you please respond to our four questions and tell us your views which we will report in our February newsletter. We need your responses by February 7 to be included in the newsletter.

1. Would you vote YES to support a ban on semi-automatic and automatic guns?
2. Would you vote YES to support a ban on clips larger than 10?
3. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of guns?
4. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of ammunition?

### Congressman Eric Swalwell Response

See Congressman Swalwell's response below to your questions for the February newsletter. As you know, he is an original co-sponsor of the assault weapons ban and is a freshman whip on the legislation. <http://swalwell.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/swalwell-applauds-introduction-of-assault-weapons-ban-in-house>

1. Would you vote YES to support a ban on semi-automatic and automatic guns? YES
2. Would you vote YES to support a ban on clips larger than 10? YES
3. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of guns? YES
4. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of ammunition? YES

Assemblywomen Susan Bonilla

Dear Brodie:

Thank you for taking the time to ask me for my thoughts concerning the national conversation on gun control legislation.

In light of recent tragedies across our nation, especially the horrible attack in Newtown, Connecticut, it would be irresponsible not to reexamine our gun control policies as well as our mental health services. I support the Constitutional right to bear arms. However, I do believe it is essential to have strong regulations in place to protect the safety of our communities.

Regarding your questionnaire, here are my specific answers:

**1. Would you vote YES to support a ban on semi-automatic and automatic guns?**

Yes. California already has some of the nation's toughest laws preventing the sale and possession of semi-automatic and automatic weapons. However, we can tighten up these laws and close loopholes that have enabled the gun industry to flood our communities with rapid-fire, military-style weapons.

**2. Would you vote YES to support a ban on clips larger than 10?**

Yes. California already prohibits the manufacture, importation and sale of large capacity magazines that hold over 10 rounds of ammunition. However, there are still loopholes in current law that allow for the possession of these large capacity magazines, and enable the assembly and conversion of these magazines to greatly exceed the 10-round legal limit.

**3. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of guns?**

Yes. California already requires that purchasers of firearms must pass criminal background checks which are cross-referenced with several federal and state law enforcement databases. Also, I support strengthening regulations to prevent individuals who are already on these databases from owning firearms.

**4. Would you vote YES to support universal background checks for the purchase of ammunition?**

Current state law does not require background checks for the sale and possession of ammunition. However, I support strengthening existing regulations that require vendors to record and retain specific personal information about the ammunition purchaser at the point of sale.

Thank you for contacting me on this important issue. I will work with my colleagues in the Legislature along with local officials to find measured solutions that will curtail the tide of violence in our schools and communities.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Bonilla  
Assemblywoman, 14<sup>th</sup> District

## 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.

## Reports about/from our Elected Officials

### Congressman George Miller

### Enter the 2013 Congressional Art Competition

WASHINGTON, DC – Are you a high school artist? Do you want a chance at having your artwork displayed in the U.S. Capitol and visiting D.C. this June? Then listen up, because Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez) is now accepting entries for the 2013 Congressional Arts Contest for California's 11th Congressional District. Deadline for submissions is the week of April 15, 2013.

High school student artists in the 11th District are invited to submit an original painting, drawing or other art form for the competition. One student's work will be selected by a judging panel of local artists to hang in the U.S. Capitol Building for one year along with student artwork from across the country. The winning student will also be flown to D.C. in June for the Annual Congressional Art Competition Reception.

Miller announced today that he will once again hold the popular **"Fan Favorite"** Art competition at [Facebook.com/RepGeorgeMiller](https://www.facebook.com/RepGeorgeMiller) from **April 29 to May 3** with all of the artwork submitted to the Congressional Art Competition from his district. Miller encourages the artists' friends, family, classmates, teachers and principals to "like" their "fan favorite" piece of artwork. The artwork receiving the most Fan Favorite votes, or the runner up, will be displayed in Miller's Concord district office, provided it is not also selected by the judging panel.

"I encourage high school artists in my congressional district to enter this contest. Every year I am so impressed with the high caliber and diversity of student art work that hangs in the U.S. Capitol," said Miller. "Art is a critical component of a well-rounded education for young people, not to mention an important influence on the fabric of our society. There are so many talented young people in my district and I'm proud to have the opportunity to share their work with my colleagues and visitors to the Capitol. This contest is a great opportunity for students to receive recognition for their artistic talent and I'm honored to support it."

The contest is part of the nationwide annual Congressional Art Competition that showcases the artistic talents of students across the country. The winning 11th District student and a guest will be flown, courtesy of Southwest Airlines, to Washington, D.C. to attend a national reception in June. The winner's artwork will be displayed in the Cannon Tunnel running between the Capitol and the Cannon House Office Building and the winning student will have the opportunity to receive an art scholarship to the Savannah College of Art and Design, in Savannah, Georgia.

The 2012 winner from the 7th Congressional District was Courtney von Savoye from Concord High School. Her piece, a drawing, entitled "Pepper Values," will be returned to her. In its place in the Capitol will hang the art by the 2013 winner.

**Artwork is due the week of April 15th.** Artwork must be accompanied by a [Student Release Form](#).

Entries must be original and submitted in one of several categories: Prints: lithographs, silkscreen, etc.; Drawings: colored pencils, charcoal, etc; Paintings: oil, water colors, etc.; Mixed Media: ink, pencil, marker, etc.; Computer Generated Art; Collages created with non-original artwork; Asian Calligraphy: (black ink on rice paper) with translation, and all types of photography.

Artwork must be no larger than 28 x 28, and 4 inches deep, and weigh no more than 15 pounds including the frame.

For more information, please contact Adrienne Ursino at (925) 602-1880.

### **Congressman Eric Swalwell**

## **Rep. Swalwell Joins Bipartisan Freshmen Letter Calling for Solutions to Economic Challenges**

**Feb 14, 2013**

*WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Eric Swalwell (CA-15) joined a letter signed by over 30 new Democratic and Republican Members of the House pledging to work together and calling for the President and Congress to do the same to address our country's economic challenges. The letter was sent to House leadership and reaffirms the country's promise to our seniors to preserve Social Security and Medicare, recognizes that both revenue and spending must be part of any solution, and calls on both parties to work together in the nation's interest.*

*Swalwell released the following statement:*

"I'm proud to join my fellow new Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, in pledging today to develop a comprehensive long-term solution to our nation's economic and budgetary challenges. No one person or political party has all of the answers, and so I believe we must listen to one another to solve our budgetary problems, both large and small.



“Thirty-two Freshmen Members of Congress signed the letter as symbol of our commitment to working together. Our constituents are tired of the partisan bickering in Washington and have elected us to find solutions to our current unsustainable budgetary path and to help continue economic growth.

“Such big challenges require big solutions, and I came to Congress to do big things. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to develop and enact reforms that rise to the level of the difficult choices we face and grow our economy and create jobs. We must end the era of incremental government and the threat of sequestration.

“While both parties must work together and develop bipartisan solutions to reduce our budget deficit and secure our economic future, no one group can be allowed to shoulder the entire burden. We need to reduce our deficit in a balanced way. I will not support a plan that breaks our promise to America’s seniors regarding Social Security or Medicare, or one that otherwise balances the budget on the backs of the poor or middle class. We also cannot rely solely on increased revenue, or avoid reducing wasteful, inefficient, or counterproductive federal spending.

“The American people have said over and over again they expect their Member of Congress to come together to address issues concerning our budget, help speed economic growth, and assist in creating jobs. I hear their call. This is a first step towards a bipartisan movement forward.”

### **Congressman Jerry McNerney**

## **Lawmakers urge more study of Delta tunnels**

Stockton Record  
*February 14, 2013*

Members of Congress urged the U.S. Department of Interior on Wednesday to study the full costs and benefits of alternatives to Gov. Jerry Brown's twin tunnels plan for the Delta.

State officials reversed course in December when they announced they would conduct a cost-benefit study for Brown's preferred plan - two large tunnels running from the Sacramento River in the north to the export pumps near Tracy, a project estimated to cost \$14 billion.

But in a letter Wednesday, Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Stockton, asked Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to conduct similar analyses on alternatives, including a smaller, single tunnel plan recently proposed by a coalition of groups.

"We believe California's taxpayers, small business owners, farmers and families deserve the best information possible and to know exactly how much a plan will cost before it is implemented," McNerney and other members wrote.

Analyzing only the preferred alternative is "irresponsible and further illustrates yet again



that the broader concerns and needs of the Bay-Delta region are being left out of the discussion," the letter said.

### **State Senator Mark DeSaulnier**

#### **DeSaulnier Statement on California Foreclosure Numbers**

**February 15, 2013**

"It is outstanding to hear that the number of foreclosures starting in our state has nosedived since the California Homeowner's Bill of Rights has been enacted," Senator Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord) said. "According to Realtytrac, the number of California homes that started on the path to foreclosure in January is down 75 percent from a year earlier. Our goal with the Homeowner's Bill of Rights was to help families who are losing their homes through no fault of their own, and it is clear that our efforts are starting to pay off. These common-sense solutions are already helping working families in California keep their homes. One such solution requires lenders to provide a "single point of contact" for homeowners to work with as they seek a loan modification or alternatives to foreclosure. These reforms will ensure that working Californians have the ability to responsibly navigate the loan modification and foreclosure process."