

**Newsletter: January 2012**

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**January Meeting: Thursday, January 26, 2012, 6:15 pm at Crow Canyon Country Club**

**Topic: "California Death Penalty and Prison Reform"**

**Speaker: Jeanne Woodford- Former Director of the California Department of Corrections**

Jeanne Woodford, the former director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation who as warden at San Quentin reluctantly oversaw four executions, has recently become the executive director of the nonprofit Death Penalty Focus. Currently she is a Senior Distinguished Fellow at the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy. She will be discussing her thoughts on the death penalty and the need to reform the California penal system.

**Young Person Duet**

Audrey Raine Butler and Casey Conlon will perform for us. Audrey is the daughter of our Treasurer, Ross Butler, and is attending Los Cerros Middle School as an eighth grader. Audrey is a prolific singer/song writer and is currently producing her first music album "Raine on Me," which will be released on I-Tunes sometime this Summer of 2012. Audrey will perform one of her songs written for guitar and a special musical piece called "Fix a Heart" by Demi Lavato, which will be accompanied by Casey Conlon on the Cello.

**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, January 23, 2012.**

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

**In this Issue**

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## Presidents Corner

First off, Happy New Year to all. I hope that 2012 is a good year for all of us. We, the Board of the SRVDC, are doing our utmost to put together dinner programs that we think you will find interesting, informative and enjoyable. We are starting the year off with an excellent speaker who I have heard a number of times. No one can question her qualifications to discuss the death penalty or challenge her on her motives. I'm sure you will all find it a worthwhile evening. To lighten the evening a bit we are also going to have a recital by two young very talented students.. I'm sure you will enjoy their performance. Let us know what you think about the programs we put together and give us your ideas about subjects you would like to hear discussed of people you would like us to try to get as our speakers.

After eight years on the SRVDC Board Judy Link has decided to step down and focus her efforts on voter registration and getting President Obama re-elected this year. I know you will all join me in thanking Judy for her many contributions to our organization these past years. She has done so many things to help our goals and has given so much of herself. She is one of the principle reasons I got involved in the club in the first place. Her energy and knowledge will be missed on the board. We are looking for a replacement so please consider volunteering as we can use your help.

The year ahead promises to be interesting and challenging for our country and our state. The republicans running for office at all levels keep preaching the same old divisive garbage and, should they get elected (heaven forbid) .will continue the policies of, by and for the rich. Listening to the front runner for the republican nomination, Mitt Romney, shows just how out of touch with the plight of the average person they are. Here is a man who is worth hundreds of millions of dollars who wants to see taxes for the rich cut even more. He just admitted that he only pays about 15 percent in taxes. He justifies this by saying that most of his income is from investments. The money he makes from his books he gives away and in his words, only makes a little from speaking engagements. That little was over \$375,000 last year. I don't know about you, but \$375,000 is a lot to me. Is it no wonder he seems to have no empathy for the 99 percent.

And just think, he is likely the most moderate of the republicans running for president. All of them want to cut taxes for the wealthy and punish the little guy who is just making or in way too many cases losing everything he thought he had; his job, his house and his feeling of wellbeing. To me the choices are clear; do we re-elect President Obama and return our democratic elected back to office or do we sit it out and watch a disaster in the making. Like many others there are many things I am been disappointed with in the Obama administration; however, I realize just how important it is that we do not sit back and watch one of these republican nut cases get elected.

Our nation is at a critical point where we can decide to be responsible as a society, pay taxes, rebuild our infrastructure, educate our children and work to leave a better environment than the one we inherited, or, we can stick our heads in the sand, say everything is alright and we only need to let the rich lead us down the path to ultimate destruction. In my mind it is a clear choice.

I am looking forward to seeing and talking with as many of you as possible in the coming months. I value other people's ideas and thoughts as I believe we all have something to offer each other. Please don't hesitate to write or call me with your suggestions and or comments. I look forward to responding. Have a good month and remember to renew your membership

Jim Donnelly- President SRVDC

*"The world stands aside to let anyone pass who knows where he is going"- David Starr Jordan*

## **SRVDC Website**

Just a reminder that our website <http://srvdems.org/> is up and running. 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.

### **Ray Link : A Careful Analysis of the Iowa Republican Caucus**

Some of you probably understood that my use of the word (?) Oooooops!! as descriptive of the recent Iowa Republican Caucus was tongue in cheek. In a more reflective vein, please let me clarify my observations.

First, one could conclude from the rise and fall of most of the candidates that Iowa Republicans are fickle. They just couldn't make up their minds, even though the candidates were all extremely well qualified. But despite the candidates qualifications, the voters simply got up on the wrong side of the bed one day and decided that they liked another candidate better than the one they were excited about the day before. As a result, we had what one pundit described as a "Gong Show" or to put it another way it resembled a scene from the movie "Caddy Shack" with Bill Murray blowing up any rodent that was foolish enough to stick his head out of his hole. This analysis obviously doesn't apply to all of you who were classmates at East. But those who graduated from Roosevelt, or other schools in other parts of the state, boy are they fickle.

Amusing as the above may be, or frightening if you, like me, think we need a strong two party system, I don't think it's an accurate analysis. Most Iowan's I know, whether Republican or Democrat, are not necessarily fickle. Instead, I think, as do most of the political analyst I've listened to, Republicans as well as Democrats, we had an exceptionally weak field of candidates this year, all of whom were fatally flawed and when their flaws were revealed Iowa Republicans made a responsible decision and rejected those they had thought would be the "great white hope".

Think about it. Michelle Bachmann won the Iowa straw poll (which is more of a fund raising ploy by the Republican party than an authentic assessment of a candidate, but that's a different issue). Then when it became apparent that she was nuts (sorry, my bias is showing), Perry came in to save the day. Except he couldn't remember what day it was, or some such thing. Then along came Hermann Cain, who turned out to have a few scandals in his closet, and more importantly he couldn't remember anything about Libya and whether Obama had done the right thing there. Luckily Newt was much better in the debates than most of the other candidates, and perhaps out of desperation on the part of the voters, he began to soar in the polls. Granted, he does occasionally seem to have what appears to be a good idea (until closer examination suggests otherwise – the judiciary should come under the control of Congress???) but his ego always seems to get the better of him and besides Romney wouldn't play nice and quit reminding voters that Newt had a lot of negatives that wouldn't have been so apparent if everyone had just remained positive.

So now we have Santorum as the alternative to "Mittens" Romney. Since his opponents didn't have sufficient time before the caucus to fully vet him, he's on to New Hampshire, having achieved a tie vote in Iowa. But he will be vetted, and my prediction is he will be found wanting and the ultimate Republican candidate will be Romney, a Mormon in terms of religion who will probably have a tough time (particularly in the South), and who

will have a tough time elsewhere generating the enthusiasm he will need to beat Barack Obama, who should be vulnerable this year because he hasn't been able in three years to cure a recession he inherited that has been compared to the Great Depression that took over a decade to turn around, and then only with the "help" of World War II.

So, you tell me. Despite the sincere, good faith efforts of the good people of Iowa, including good East High Classmates and friends, who tried to play by the rules and take seriously the task of selecting a worthy candidate, was that ever really possible? It has been suggested that those Republicans who might have been better candidates decided to sit out this election, recognizing that Obama, despite the economy, might not be an easy opponent. Let's hope that's true and that because we still need a strong two party system, the next time around both parties will put forth candidates that would be worthy of the office of the President of the United States of America.

Ray Link

**Thanks to Elaine Baldwin for sharing this notice**

If you are having trouble viewing this message, you can [view the message online](#).

**January 06, 2012**

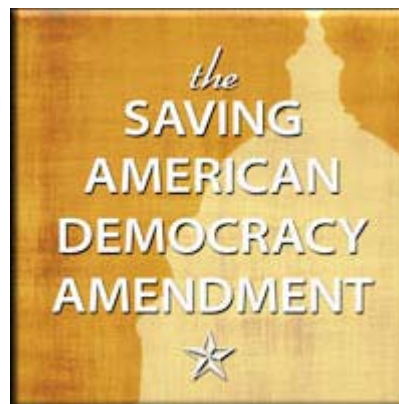


Dear Friend,

Thank you for signing the petition supporting [The Saving American Democracy Amendment](#). The outpouring of support from you and tens of thousands of others sends a loud and clear message that the American people want to undo the disastrous 5-4 Citizens United Supreme Court decision. We must stop corporations from spending unlimited sums of money, without disclosure, to influence Americans elections. American democracy is not for sale.

The Constitution is an extraordinary document. It has served our country well for more than two centuries. In my view, however, this is one of those rare times when a constitutional amendment is the only way to save the democracy that our founders created.

Passing a constitutional amendment will not be easy and it will not happen tomorrow. It is a long and difficult process and there will be many bumps along the road. Like other great struggles in our modern history – women's rights, civil rights, environmental protection, etc. – we will need to bring millions of Americans together to demand that Congress and state legislatures represent the needs of ordinary Americans, and not just the wealthy and powerful.



The promise of democracy -- the essential democracy this amendment is directed at protecting -- is that the ultimate power in our nation rests with its people, and not with corporations or even elected officials. Our joint effort to defend this nation's democratic electoral process is something that speaks to what being an American is about, and something we should be very proud of.

I hope you ask your friends to [sign the petition](#). And if you aren't already a subscriber to The Bernie Buzz, we'll sign you up for the electronic newsletter to keep you posted on what's happening to the amendment and other news in Washington. (If you do not wish to receive the Bernie Buzz, you may unsubscribe below.)

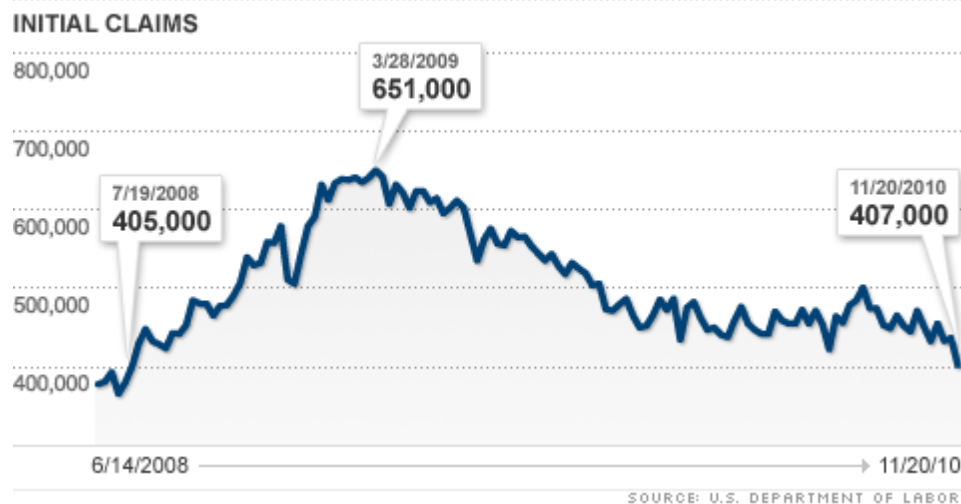
Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders

## Some Good News on Unemployment

The trend is down from its peak at the end of The Great Recession begun by the failed Bush tax cuts and policies. Give credit to President Obama and his team for IMPROVING the U.S. economy since he became president:



# Reports from our Elected Officials

## Congressman Jerry McNerney

### **McNerney Statement On The Stop Online Piracy Act**

*Jan. 18, 2012*

“As a person with copyrighted works, I remain concerned about the protection of creative works. Despite this, I strongly oppose SOPA as it stands. I have heard from many of the people I represent who are worried about their right to free speech on the internet, and I agree with their concerns.

“Freedom of speech is one of the rights we cherish the most in the United States. Any law that would threaten that fundamental right is flawed and must not be allowed to move forward.

“Our economic power has always been based on innovation and the free flow of ideas. The thinkers and creators in our country have always showed remarkable ingenuity, and stopping the stream of information on the internet would put the United States at an international disadvantage.

“We must remain committed to American advancement that comes from the freedoms we hold most dear. This is what will continue our progress and keep us competitive in the global market.”

### **Internship Positions Available In The Office Of Congressman McNerney**

*Jan. 13, 2011*

*Stockton, Calif.* – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) announced today that he has openings in each of his district offices for Congressional Interns. The interns will be engaged in the civics process and get first-hand experience in the daily operations of a Congressional office.

“I encourage students who have an interest in the legislative process to apply for the positions in both of my offices. This is a great way to learn more about the government, and to give back to our community,” said Congressman McNerney.

College and post-graduate students are encouraged to apply, and high school students will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All internships are unpaid and are designed to provide the student with educational and professional experience. The Congressman's office will partner with institutions that offer academic credit for internships.

To apply for one of the positions, students can mail or fax a cover letter and resume to the office they are interested in working in:

#### Stockton Office

Attn: Internship Coordinator  
2222 Grand Canal Blvd. #7  
Stockton, CA 95207  
(209) 476-8552 (phone)  
(209) 476-8587 (fax)

#### Pleasanton Office



Attn: Internship Coordinator  
5776 Stoneridge Mall Blvd. #175  
Pleasanton, CA 94588  
(925) 737-0727 (phone 1)  
(408) 744-0727 (phone 2)  
(925) 737-0734 (fax)

## **Congressman George Miller**

### **Visiting Richmond Schools**

January 18, 2012 5:09 PM

Thought you would enjoy these photos from around Richmond last Thursday. I had a great time meeting with both students and teachers at Richmond and San Pablo Schools.

First up was a visit with the students from the Engineering class at Helms Middle School. Recognize the student on my left when we're sitting around the table? That is Kaisaiah Clark. Kaisaiah and some of his classmates are currently in a nationally airing Chevron commercial. We talked about the need for science education and about what they're working on in their class. Some of the Helms' student journalists took time to do an interview - I'll try to post a link or a photo after their article is published.

Next it was over to Richmond High to meet with the Bay Area Peacekeepers. These students stuck around afterschool to chat after a day of final exams! Every single one of these students plans to attend college and I certainly look forward to seeing that. [Richmond Confidential](#) and the West County Times covered the meeting. From [Richmond Confidential](#):

At Richmond High, Miller took questions from the students and often responded with light queries of his own. The 66-year-old Miller, who has represented the 7th Congressional District since 1975, told students he grew up in the area, and spent much of his youth staying with his grandmother on Garvin Avenue in the 1950s, just blocks away from Richmond High.

Miller spoke of getting in trouble, running with a rough crowd and even being suspended from high school for much of his sophomore year before shaping up at a city college. Miller would later graduate from UC Davis Law School.

But Miller cautioned the students that the challenges they face are far steeper than those he overcame. "It's a huge difference now," Miller told the teens. "When I was young, I could have gone on to work at Chevron, or a steel mill, or whatever, and done alright and supported a family. Now those opportunities are not nearly as available. For you, education is the ball game."

Later, Miller related a piece of advice he said he got from a baseball coach when he was a wayward youth. "He said the more education you have, the more you know, the fewer people can tell you no," Miller said.

By the end, the students and the white-haired veteran of Capitol Hill were cracking jokes and giggling while posing for pictures.

Last stop(s) of the day were at Dover Elementary. I was able to join Principal Eric Peterson in congratulating several students in the after-school program on their academic achievements.

Then had a great meeting with several West County teachers who have earned their National Board Certification, Principal Eric Peterson, and WCCUSD Superintendent, Dr. Bruce Harter. Principal Peterson was honored at the White House in December (link)for his "commitment to professional development" and on his

National Board Certification achievement. Congratulations are in order for every teacher who has earned this certification. At the meeting, many of the teachers noted the certification process was both professional development and personal development. I remain impressed by their commitment to teaching, to their students, and especially, their commitment to our community.

## **Congressman John Garamendi**

### **Momentum Builds for Garamendi Bill Preventing Indefinite Detention of American Citizens**

January 6, 2012 11:44 AM

*Bill Has 33 Co-Sponsors, Including Ranking Members of Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Judiciary Committees*

FAIRFIELD, CA – A bill that would clarify existing law to protect the due process rights of American citizens and lawful residents is picking up momentum in the New Year. The Due Process Guarantee Act of 2011, H.R. 3702, authored by Congressmen John Garamendi (D-Fairfield, CA) and Martin Heinrich (D-Albuquerque, NM), has been co-sponsored by 33 members of Congress, including the ranking members of the Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Judiciary committees. H.R. 3702 is companion legislation to Senator Dianne Feinstein's Due Process Guarantee Act of 2011.

"We must clarify existing law to guarantee the due process rights of every American. It is a foundational principle of our great nation that we are all innocent until proven guilty and that we all deserve a fair trial," Congressman Garamendi said.

"The Due Process Guarantee Act is picking up momentum because this isn't about Democrats or Republicans; it's about what makes us Americans," Garamendi added. "We have the privilege of living in a free society. Let's keep it that way. I implore my Republican colleagues to let this important legislation come up for a vote."

Section 1021 (formerly Section 1031 of S. 1867) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Conference Report would authorize the indefinite military detention of suspected terrorists without explicitly protecting U.S. citizens' rights. Under this new law, individual American citizens suspected of terrorism may be detained under the laws of war and held indefinitely "until the end of hostilities." The Due Process Guarantee Act of 2011 ensures that U.S. citizens and permanent residents on American soil are protected from this provision.

The bill clarifies existing U.S. law and states unequivocally that the government cannot indefinitely detain American citizens or lawful U.S. residents. The Due Process Guarantee Act of 2011 became necessary due to ambiguous language in the National Defense Authorization Act.

## **State Senator Mark DeSaulnier**

### **DeSaulnier Bill Advances to Prohibit Unnecessary CalHFA Foreclosures**

January 10, 2012

Today the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee unanimously approved SB 447 (DeSaulnier) to prohibit the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) from foreclosing on borrowers who are current on their mortgage payments, but rent out their homes because their mortgage is upside down.

"These CalHFA borrowers are not speculators and are not taking advantage of the system. They are upside down and are simply trying to meet their obligation and avoid foreclosure," said DeSaulnier (D-Concord).



“When homeowners are compelled to move because of life-events, such as raising a growing family, and they continue to pay their mortgages rather than go into default, they should be applauded, not foreclosed upon.”

This issue came to light through a report released in October, 2011 by the Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes entitled, “*Good Deeds Punished: California’s State-Run Mortgage Lender Forecloses on Californians Current on Their Loans.*” The report chronicles many instances where borrowers with growing families or other changing life circumstances run afoul of CalHFA’s stringent policies when the family moved to more suitable housing. At the time, CalHFA believed they were required to foreclose when the home no longer became the primary residence.

At the written request of Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg and DeSaulnier (Chair of the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee), CalHFA temporarily suspended such foreclosures in October, 2011 until it can take up this policy at the Board of Director’s meeting later this month. SB 447 will provide clear guidance to block these foreclosures should CalHFA believe statutory authority is needed.

Borrowers identified in the report faced incredible losses if they were to sell in a depressed housing market, so they temporarily rented out their CalHFA financed home while still making their monthly mortgage payments. Unlike housing finance agencies in most other states which are more flexible in their policies, CalHFA was giving those borrowers an ultimatum of moving back in, repaying the loan in full, or facing foreclosure. Each foreclosure costs CalHFA approximately \$50,000 in uninsured losses. SB 447 would strictly prohibit such foreclosures.

### **Assembly Woman Joan Buchanan**

#### **Legislative Priorities for 2012**

Every year I try to limit the number of bills I author because I believe that the Legislature spends too much time writing new laws rather than solving problems and ensuring adequate oversight of existing programs and services.

##### **The Budget**

- The most important bill we pass is the budget bill. It is a statement of our values. Producing a balanced, on-time budget is our highest priority. As a member of the Budget Committee and chair of the Budget Sub Committee on Government Administration and Information Technology, I support and understand the need for proper oversight and review. I also expect the Legislature to spend considerable time evaluating the Governor's pension reform package and its impact on our finances.

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##### **Education**

- Education will continue to be a high priority for me. As a former school board member, I understand the impact of recent cuts in funding and believe it is critically important to maintain and increase current funding levels. A strong education system is our greatest economic engine.

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##### **Delta Protection**

- Every year, invasive non-native plant species grow like weeds throughout the Delta water ways, threatening the ecosystem, obstructing navigation, interfering with recreation and harming fisheries. Currently, only water hyacinth and egeria densa are authorized for treatment by the Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW). South African Spongeplant is a highly invasive weed that is growing and spreading quickly. I will introduce a bill to designate DBW as the lead agency in controlling South African Spongeplant in the Delta because early stage treatment is the most cost effective.

## Streamlining Government Procurement

- Another area of interest is the use of technology to streamline government processes. This includes updating existing legacy systems that are decades old. As chair of the Select Committee on Government Efficiency, Technology, and Innovation, I had several meetings and held a hearing during the recess on how the state buys, builds, and implements new technology systems. I am working with the Department of General Services, California Technology Agency, and industry organizations to improve the procurement process.

Detailed information about the bills I have authored can always be found on [my website](#). My new bills for the 2012 legislative session will be posted once they are finalized in the next few weeks. The last day to introduce new bills this year is February 24.

## Assembly Fellowship Program

Each year, 18 individuals are selected to participate in the program. The 11-month fellowship provides an introduction to public policy formation and adoption in the California Legislature through full-time work as a professional legislative staff member. This unique program provides an opportunity for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to directly participate in the legislative process.



Applicants must have received their bachelor's degree by September 2012. Both mid-career professionals and recent college graduates are encouraged to apply. Applications for the 2012-2013 class must be submitted by February 22, 2012. [Click here](#) for more information.

## Membership Drive

It is that time of year again, 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

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

\_\_\_\_ Fundraising

\_\_\_\_ Publicity

\_\_\_\_ Local Government

\_\_\_\_ Newsletter

\_\_\_\_ Hospitality

\_\_\_\_ Programs & Functions

**Make checks payable to: San Ramon Valley Democratic Club**

**P.O. Box 1218**

**Danville, CA 94526**

## Upcoming Events

Antioch Community Center, 4703 Lone Tree Way, Antioch, California	<i>Friday, January 20, 2012</i> <i>6:00 PM</i>	<b>Congressman John Garamendi's Birthday and Annual Crab Feed</b>
Crow Canyon Country Club El Capitan Dr. Danville	<i>Thursday, January 26, 2012 6:15 PM</i>	<b>Jeanne Woodford</b> , Senior Distinguished Fellow, Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy, University of California, Berkeley School of Law, talks about the death Penalty & Prison Reform
Concord Centre, Concord,	<i>Friday, January 27, 2012</i>	<b>Senator Mark DeSaulnier's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Crab Feed</b>
Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek Co-sponsored by Peace Committee of Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church	<i>Friday, February 10, 7:00 PM</i>	David Cobb: Creating Democracy & Challenging Corporate Rule  The recent U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Citizens United v. FEC opened the floodgates to unlimited corporate spending on elections.  David Cobb, an attorney and organizer for the Move to Amend coalition,
Crow Canyon Country Club El Capitan Dr. Danville	<i>Thursday, February 23, 2012 6:15 PM</i>	<b>Congressman Pete Stark-</b> Come meet our congressman who's district will include San Ramon after the 2012 entative
Laborer's Training Center 1001 Westside Drive San Ramon, CA 94583	<i>Saturday, February 25, 2012 10:00 Am to Noon</i>	<b>Assemblywomen Joan Buchanan Pancake Breakfast</b> Come and listen to Joan discuss the budget and others issues of importance to all of us. RSVP to Joan's office at (925) 328-1515
Round Hill Country Club 3169 Round Hill Rd, Alamo	<i>Thursday, March 6, 2012 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM</i>	<b>Assemblywomen Joan Buchanan &amp; Speaker John Perez</b> are hosting a fund raising reception . RSVP to Pat Clemmons (925) 518-3430.
Crow Canyon Country Club El Capitan Dr. Danville	<i>Thursday, March 22, 2012 6:15 PM</i>	<b>Michael Lighty, Director of Public policy, California Nurses Association</b> will discuss health care reform.