

The Platform

Volume 11 Issue 06, June 2007

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Contribute event and activity notices of interest to Democrats and articles to the Platform Newsletter, but please limit submissions to 500 words.



Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club

P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611

President's Message, June 2007 Gary Sirbu

Dear MGO Members,

Which Plan for Universal Health Care is best for California?



Four California universal health care proposals—from Governor Schwarzenegger, Don Perata, Fabian Nunez, and Sheila Kuehl—are currently receiving serious discussion in Sacramento, but the press has only given them sporadic attention. The issue can be expected to get a lot hotter in the fall, but MGO plans to give you a sneak preview. MGO member Dorothy Rice is planning a presentation on these proposals for June meeting.

Dorothy is a former national director of the National Center for Health Statistics, a federal agency. She is also Professor Emeritus at the U.C San Francisco Medical Center, where she taught medical economics for 25 years. This is a program you will not want to miss.

The MGO general meeting is on Thursday June 21st at 7:30.

Transition Underway

At the May meeting, the membership approved the Nominating Committee's slate of club officers and executive board members for the coming program year. Judy Cox has been nominated for club president, and her term begins on July 1. She is a former president of the Oakland League of Women Voters and is highly familiar with Oakland government and politics. Judy is already working with the executive board for a smooth transition. We are very fortunate that she has agreed to lead the club.

State of the Club

Next year MGO will celebrate its 50th birthday. Local Democrats know about MGO. The Platform, which Marcus Johnson has further developed into a very interesting newsletter is read in many

Important June Dates

June 5th, The First Tuesday Luncheon is an informal gathering from Oakland's Political Community. RSVP Judy Belcher 655.8658

June 6th, Wednesday, at 7:00 pm, Alameda County Central Committee, 300 Estudillo Ave., San Leandro. More info at <http://www.acdems.org/>

June 6th, Wednesday, at 6:30 PM Democracy for America (DFA) Meet up, Rockridge Library, 5366 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618, (510) 597-5017

June 13th, Wednesday, 7:00PM to 9:00PM City of Alameda Democratic Club (CADC) Monthly meeting featured speaker County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker, at Alameda Hospital 2070 Clinton Avenue, Conference Room "C" (1st Floor), Alameda.

June 17th, Sunday, Father's Day

June 18th, Monday, 7:00PM - TriValley Democratic Club, IBEW Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy, Dublin, CA; More info contact: info@trivalleydems.com

June 21st, Thursday at 7:30pm to 9:30pm, MGO General Meeting featuring a presentation on Universal Health Care held at Piedmont Gardens Retirement Community, (Sky Room) 110 41st Street, Oakland. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

June 22nd, Friday, at Noon, Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club, Luncheon featuring California Secretary of State Debra Bowen. RSVP by email to Steve Tidrick, Pres., club@demlawyers.org

No Meeting, MGO Executive Board meeting at Piedmont Gardens. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

June 28th, Thursday, at 6:00pm, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club (WDRC) Membership Meeting, 390 27th Street, Oakland. More info at <http://www.wellstoneclub.org/>

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Consider receiving the club's newsletter by e-mail only, which saves the club the cost of postage and printing. Contact Marcus Johnson at marcus_a_johnson@yahoo.com

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
June 2007 (cont.)**

parts of our Democratic community.

Democratic activists are aware of the leadership roles we have taken on important issues in the past and are taking now. In 2003, MGO members led the successful countywide Democratic effort to persuade the Board of Supervisors to support a death penalty moratorium, and this year MGO's Proposition 13 Reform Task Force convened a countywide Democratic task force that is working to spark a split-roll initiative.

The club's **Education Committee** is still closely tracking educational issues in the Oakland Unified School District. In May, it met with OEA president Betty Olsen-Jones for a briefing on the latest developments affecting our schools.

Our strength as a club has always been its continuing concentration on issues relating to local government and politics. Members who regularly attend our monthly meetings really learn a lot about these issues. This program year we presented programs on West Oakland's enormous Central Station redevelopment project, on the Oakland truancy crisis, and on Bay Area efforts to fight global warming. We also heard from Assembly member Sandre Swanson on his experience to date in Sacramento.

As a grass-roots club, we have also sought to promote clean Oakland government, and we recently presented a panel on the jurisdiction and operations of the Oakland Public Ethics Commission. On the elections front, we held a candidate endorsement meeting last September, and then, under the leadership of Jean Brown, distributed 8000 MGO endorsement flyers to the homes of Oakland's registered Democratic voters. I am confident that our educational and activist traditions will continue and that MGO will thrive.

"Dems Have Taken the Upper Hand" On Health Care

As America's health care crisis continues to grow in intensity and scope, Democrats are taking the lead in attempting to make California the first state to accomplish comprehensive health care reform. For more, go to <http://www.cadem.org/>

MGO Committee meets with OEA Chief

Oakland Education Association president Betty Olson-Jones attended the MGO Education Committee's May meeting and briefed the committee on some of the pressing education issues in the Oakland public schools. She reported that the OUSD administration had just published the results of a study it conducted on the distribution of teacher, by experience level, in the District's schools.

The results:

Exp.	Flats %	Hills %
Interns	53%	46%
1-2 Yrs	64%	36%
3-5	59%	41%
6-10	59%	41%
11-20	58%	42%
20+	57%	43%

Ms. Olson-Jones will provide MGO with a copy of the study, which is so new that the OEA has not yet analyzed this data. She believes, however, that a disproportionate number of veteran teachers still teach in the hills schools, because these schools are very supportive and tend to have more stable leadership and parent participation.

Ms. Olson-Jones further reported that high numbers of new teachers are assigned to flatland schools, and this produces much turnover. Further staffing disruption occurs when a flatlands school operating under

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Congressional Black Caucus

The Congressional Black Caucus, torn between two major African-American candidates in the special election to replace the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald in California's 37th Congressional District, has refused to endorse either candidate.

For more go to http://www.capitolweekly.net/news/article.html?cle_id=1497

the No Child Left Behind Act fails to meet the requirements by the end of the five-year improvement period. At that point, the entire school is reorganized, for example, divided into smaller schools. Teachers must reapply for jobs at the new school. Often the more experienced teachers are not hired, because funding is more limited and these teachers receive higher salaries.

Another problem is that the site-based budgeting system requires principals to spend much more time on paper and planning and much less time visiting classrooms, observing teachers, and handling disciplinary situations. Smaller class sizes, the assignment of more experienced principals, and the presence of more support staff could motivate more experienced teachers to teach in the flats.

The primary cause of almost all of these problems is a severe scarcity of funds. When committee members asked how a Democratic club could be of assistance, Ms. Olson-Jones suggested: (1) lobby to have the Port of Oakland contribute some of its revenue to the school district; (2) work on Proposition 13 split-roll reform; (3) urge local corporations to help with funding, and (4) assist in getting more city residents to volunteer as tutors.

Bobbie Williams, Chair,
MGO Education Committee

Blue Ribbon Commission on Affordable Housing Progress Report



**MGO Club General Meeting, May 17, 2007
Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Sirbu at 7:35 PM

The program for the evening included:

- A. A panel report on the State Democratic convention, moderated by Dan Kalb .
- B. A Panel discussion on the subject of "Coping with Bay Area Global Warming."

Action item:

The nomination committee submitted the following slate of officers for the club for the year 2007 - 2008:

Officers:

Judy Cox, President; Dan Kalb, Vice President; Steve Statler, Treasurer; Greg Chan, Recording Secretary

Executive Board Members:

Jean Brown, Guy Bryant, Marcus Johnson, Ralph Kanz, Wayne Nishioka, Terry Sandoval, Gary Sirbu (Ex-Officio) Robert Warwick

Respectfully submitted, Frank Russo, Chair

There were no further nominations from the floor.

The proposal to amend the Article VII, subsection 2 of the by-laws (restricting access to the membership list) was presented. This amendment failed to pass by a vote of nine against to four in favor.

It was MSP that the slate be accepted and be voted on at the next general meeting, June 21, 2007.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 PM

Respectfully submitted, Robert Warwick, Secretary

May 21, 2007, Executive Board Meeting

Agenda Items Discussed:

- Media Coordinator's Report
- Membership Committee Report
- Membership Development/Recruitment/Retention
- Membership List: Is Opt-Out Feasible?
- June Membership Program
- Medical Marijuana Resolution approved by the Board last month

The minutes (approved) were not available in time for publication

Presidential Election Radar

- **Jun. 19, 2007:** The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees host a Democratic presidential forum moderated by MSNBC
- **Jun. 28, 2007:** PBS hosts a debate of the 2008 Democratic presidential candidates
- **Jun. 30, 2007:** The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials holds a forum of the Democratic presidential candidates
- **Jul. 7-12, 2007:** NAACP National Convention
- **Jul. 15, 2007:** Presidential candidates' quarterly report due with the FEC
- **Jul. 23, 2007:** CNN, Google, YouTube and the DNC host a Democratic presidential debate
- **Jul. 28-30, 2007:** The Democratic Leadership Council holds a National Conversation
- **Sep. 26, 2007:** DNC presidential debate,
- **Oct. 30, 2007:** DNC presidential debate
- **Dec. 10, 2007:** DNC presidential debate, Los Angeles
- **Jan. 1-2, 2008:** MySpace hosts online presidential town hall forums
- **Jan. 31, 2008:** CNN and the Los Angeles Times host a debate of the Democratic presidential candidates
- **Jun. 3, 2008:** California presidential primaries
- **Nov. 4, 2008:** Election Day

For more information go to:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/>

MGO Acknowledgment

MGO congratulates Frank Russo, who has become the first online blogger to receive credentialing to cover the California legislature with the approval of the Capitol Correspondents Association of California.

Frank, an MGO member and a former MGO president, is the publisher of the widely respected California Progress Report, a daily online journal and compendium of California government and politics.



Some recent topics include:

- *Ensuring an Adequate Health Workforce.....*
- *What National Redistricting Expert Will Tell*
- *Getting Voters Mobilized in California.....*
- *Democratic Presidential Candidates Come Back*
- *What California Health Care Reform is BlueCross*
- *Preschool for California Kids in Areas Served by Low Performing Elementary Schools*

<http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/>

Proud Democrat



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P.O. Box 11622,
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Democratic Club

MGO

MGO Membership Information



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Membership options:

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Mail dues to:

P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611

**For membership information, please contact
Jean Brown at 510.653.3204
or email: jbr936@aol.com**

**Download Membership form from
<http://www.mgoclub.org/member.htm>**

**Don't forget to join our MGO Talk yahoo group:
http://mgoclub.org/join_mgotalk.htm**

FPPC# 790500 (California) FEC# C00402651 (U.S.)

Resources and Links

- Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club:
<http://www.demlawyers.org>
- Alameda (City) Democratic Club:
<http://www.alameda-demo.org>
- Cal Berkeley Democratic Club:
<http://www.caldems.com>
- Castro Valley Democratic Club:
<http://www.ebdir.net/cvdeos>
- El Cerrito Democratic Club:
<http://www.ECDClub.org>
- East Bay Young Democrats:
<http://www.eastbayyoungdems.com>
- Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club:
<http://www.wellstoneclub.org>
- California Progress Report:
<http://www.californiaprogressreport.com>
- Smart Voter <http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/alm>
- California Democratic Party <http://www.cadem.org>
- Democrats of Rossmoor
<http://www.ebaydemo.org/DOR.html>
- League of Women Voters Oakland
<http://www.lwvoakland.org>