

The Platform

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



Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club

P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE March 2007

Dear MGO Members,

Kudos to Budding MGO Luminaries:

Congratulations to the Executive Committee members Dan Kalb and Wayne Nishioka, and MGO member Joel Freid, all of whom have been appointed or elected as delegates to the Democratic State Party convention in April. Congratulations also to our Platform editor, Marcus Johnson, who has just been appointed to the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Study of Affordable Housing in Oakland. For more information on this commission, go to <http://oaklandnet.com> and click on "Housing Blue Ribbon Commission", located at the bottom of the middle column. Marcus, you have your hands full, and we all wish you well.

MGO encourages its members to apply for appointment to Oakland's boards and commissions. It is a good entree into public service and for some a beginning path to elected office. To see what openings are currently available, go to <http://oaklandnet.com> and in the search box in the upper right enter "boards and commission".

February Membership Meeting Actions: MGO unanimously passed the Proposition 13 reform resolution at February's general membership meeting. The resolution can be found on our website, <http://www.mgoclub.org>. The club also endorsed A.B. 45, authored by Assemblyman Sandre Swanson. If enacted, this measure would immediately return significant powers to the governing board of the Oakland Unified School District. MGO sent a letter of support to the Assembly Education Committee, and a copy is on our website.

Supervisor Keith Carson to Speak at March Meeting: The Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive violence reduction program last summer after 1½ years of planning by fifty individuals, including representatives from county agencies, the private sector
(Continued on page 2)

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

March Important Dates

March 6th, The First Tuesday Luncheon is an informal gathering from Oakland's Political Community. RSVP Judy Belcher 655.8658

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

March 7th, Wednesday, at 6:30 PM Democracy for America (DFA) Meet up, Rockridge Library, 5366 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618, (510) 597-5017

March 14th, Wednesday, 7:00PM to 9:00PM City of Alameda Democratic Club (CADC) Monthly Meeting at Alameda Hospital 2070 Clinton Avenue, Conference Room "C" (1st Floor), Alameda.

March 15th, Thursday at 7:30pm to 9:30pm, MGO General Meeting featuring County Supervisor Keith Carson presenting information about the County's new violence reduction program, held at Piedmont Gardens Retirement Community, (Sky Room) 110 41st Street, Oakland. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

March 18th, Sunday, 2:00 p.m., Memorial Service for the late **Susan Almon Duncan**, at the Berkeley City College, 2050 Center Street (between Shattuck and Milvia) Berkeley.

March 19th, Monday at 7:00pm, MGO Executive Board meeting at Piedmont Gardens. More info at <http://www.mgoclub.org>

March 22nd, Thursday, at 6:00pm, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club (WDRC) Membership Meeting, 390 27th Street, Oakland. More info at <http://www.wellstoneclub.org/>

Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club, Steve Tidrick, President. For date and time of next meeting, email club@demlawyers.org

President's Message (continues)

and non-profits. Implementation is already under way. Supervisor Keith Carson and the program coordinator, Andres Soto, will give highlights of the program at our March meeting.

Also in March we will finish an important discussion of the truancy resolution that the Oakland Think Tank presented to the club in January. The text is online in January's Platform. The resolution proposes creation of a Truancy Coordinator position within the City of Oakland, with the coordinator reporting directly to the City Administrator and the Mayor. The OUSD is sending one of its truancy program staff members to present its view of the proposal.

Countywide Demo Club Prop.13 Reform Organizing Moving Forward:

On February 24th, MGO convened the second meeting of the countywide Democratic Clubs Proposition 13 Reform Task Force. Representatives from the Alameda, Asian Pacific, Castro Valley, Hayward Demos, John George, and Oakland East Bay clubs attended one or both meetings. Other clubs are staying in touch, and the 16th A.D. Committee, through Joel Freid, gave great assistance by helping to convert our initial resolution to the specifications of the Democratic State Central Committee's (DSCC) .

Things are popping. Four clubs have now endorsed the resolution, and a fifth is expected to pass it on March 3rd. Task Force representatives will appear before the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee in March to urge endorsement there, and the Task Force is also planning a campaign to obtain the DSCC endorsement in April.

Meeting Location: There have been some complaints from club members about the difficulty of finding parking near Piedmont Gardens. They have suggested that we have our meetings elsewhere. Other members, however, have said that they like our current location. Please call me at 336-3373 and give me your opinion. The E-Board will discuss this at its next meeting.

See you our next membership meeting, Thursday 15th, 7:30 p.m.

Gary Sirbu, President

Memorial Service

The family of the late **Susan Almon Duncan**, invites MGO members you to attend a memorial service in her honor **March 18th, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.**, at the Berkeley City College, 2050 Center Street (between Shattuck and Milvia) Berkeley. Reception to follow.

Parking available on the street or in the structure next door.

Entitlements and Recent Changes in U.S. Tax Policy (Part I)

President Bush recently released his 2008 budget making good on his threat to slow down social spending by proposing \$95.9 billion in cuts to entitlement programs over the next five years, and \$309 billion over 10 years. Medicare alone is being targeted for \$66 billion in reduced spending over five years and \$252.4 billion over a decade. However, as Isaiah J. Poole in his article "Disastrous 2008 Budget" points out, these "cuts are dwarfed by the cost of extending Bush's tax cuts which are set to expire in 2010" and will cost taxpayers \$1.6 trillion dollars in lost revenue over the next decade. George Bush is now proposing to make these tax refunds, which primarily benefit the very wealthy, permanent. Mr. Poole also points out other tax cuts and extensions being proposed which will cost taxpayers an additional \$237.3 billion in ten years. Prominent Democrat Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid recently had this to say about Bush's budget proposal: "The budget uses deception to hide a massive increase in debt and its priorities are disconnected from the needs of middle-class Americans".

While George Bush has managed the largest transfer of wealth in five decades away from the pockets of working people under their very noses, another potentially major change in taxation policy was also recently revealed by Public Citizen and United for a Fair Economy with little public outcry; i.e., a multimillion-dollar, decade-long lobbying effort to repeal the federal estate tax aggressively led by 18 super-wealthy families who would collectively earn \$71.6 billion dollars. Americans seem to have easily acceded to the fact that the bottom one fifth now pay 18 cents on every dollar in taxes and the top fifth, only 19 cents, bringing into fruition the "flat tax policy" Ross Perot once espoused. Even the breaking news story last week that since 2001, the federal government has failed to collect \$365 billion in estimated owed

taxes per year primarily from the very wealthy seemed to evoke no public response. While the failed Iraq War, American Idol, and Anna Nicole Smith's burial arrangements have all been huge national distractions, there is another more cogent phenomenon, which explains in larger measure why the American working people have become convinced they are not entitled to federal spending on social programs, which they are largely paying for.

Since 1974, America's powerful corporations have had a highly powerful instrument, which has created the arguments for the conclusions that they want American working people to draw about social spending in order to protect and further amass trillions of dollars of wealth. This highly effective but largely invisible social weapon influencing millions of Americans in general and Congressional Democrats in particular has been the establishment of The Heritage Foundation, the largest and most influential conservative think tank in America today. With a staff of over 173 employees, it is widely recognized by Democrats and Republicans alike, as the most influential organization in the United States in the making of social and public policy for the past 3 decades.

Heritage Foundation President, Edwin J. Feulner, himself is now leading the charge to cut safety net programs enacted under President Johnson with a recent January 17th report entitled "Entitlement Programs Soak up Money That Could Boost Business". I urge readers to read this document and others on www.heritage.org to get better acquainted with the conservative arguments and paid proponents who regularly sow disinformation in major U.S. corporate news outlets like Fox News. It is impossible to minimize their influence. More on this in my next article. (To be continued) **Val Eisman**

Email Val at diane501@sbcglobal.net

E-Board Meeting Highlights

At its February 17th meeting the Executive Board:

- Voted to request the membership to amend Section 7, Para. 2, of the club's by-laws (regarding the scope of distribution of the club's mailing list) after the Board completes suggested revisions of another part of this bylaw;
- **Passed a motion that HR508, co-sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, be brought before the membership at the next general meeting for consideration of endorsement by the club; (See right column)**
- Discussed speaker topics for future board meetings. The March meeting will conclude the discussion of the Oakland Think Tank (OTT) truancy program. A representative from the OUSD will present the opposing side, followed by OTT's rebuttal. A presentation by Supervisor Keith Carson regarding the County's new violence reduction program when follow.
- Discussed a request by the Committee to Restore Habeas Corpus to appear before the club and present a proposal to modify the Federal Military Commissions Act in several respects, including restoration of the right of detainees to have federal courts rule on petitions for habeas corpus. The Board requested the president to contact the group to arrange an appearance.

Robert Warwick, MGO Secretary

HR 508

We have been asked by the Wellstone Renewal Democratic Club to endorse HR 508 authored by Representative Lynn Woolsey in partnership with Barbara Lee and also co-sponsored by Pete Stark and Jerry McNerney, among others, titled Bring the Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2007 - Declares that it is U.S. policy to: (1) end the occupation of Iraq; (2) accelerate the training and equipping of Iraq's military and security forces; (3) pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy; (4) help preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq as a nation state; (5) account for any missing U.S. Armed Forces personnel or U.S. citizens in Iraq; and (6) turn over internal security activities and military operations in Iraq to the elected government of Iraq within six months.

It also repeals the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, requires the withdrawal from Iraq of all U.S. Armed Forces and contractor security forces within six months and prohibits permanent military bases in Iraq while authorizing the president to support the deployment of international stabilization forces, provide assistance for Iraqi reconstruction including mine clearing, and compensation for civilian Iraqi casualties. It also provides for veteran's health care. The MGO Executive Board voted to offer this resolution to the membership for its support and to notify Barbara Lee of our vote.

Pamela Drake

For the full document-<http://www.theorator.com/bills110/text/hr508.html>

A Moment in History



Ida B. Wells-Barnett was a Civil Rights Pioneer, Activist, anti-lynching crusader, women's rights activist, passionate crusader against racism, journalist and teacher who spoke out on racial issues, civil rights pioneer and one of the founders of the NAACP. She was very active in the suffragist movement and became one of the founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Association for Colored Women (NACW). Ida B. Wells-Barnett died in 1931, leaving a formidable legacy of undaunted courage and tenacity in the fight against racism and sexism in America. For a complete story, go to <http://www.idabwells.org/>

OBAMA CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING IN EAST BAY

The energy level has been hard to contain as numerous groups have coalesced in California and in the Bay Area to get Barack Obama elected as the next President of the United States. More specifically, the East Bay and Oakland have powered into the forefront as part of the Obama family effort. The "East Bay for Obama" folks, gathering at a Meetup in the home of organizer Emily Weinstein, are starting the process of reaching out to other Obama support groups and talking about fundraising. The meeting was well attended and included people with a wealth of campaign experience to people for whom this campaign is their first. The common bond shared by everyone was an enthusiasm for Obama the person and Obama the next President. **The kickoff meeting is scheduled to take place on March 15.** Also meeting was East Bay4Obama, called and chaired by Obama supporter Ben Thompson. The group of over twenty people, coming from as far away as San Jose and Antioch, met at the First Unitarian Church in Oakland. Donations were made and task forces were set up. **The next meeting is planned for March 5.**

Wayne Nishioka

For more information regarding this article, please contact Wayne Nishioka (510) 420.8460 or email at wsnishioka@aol.com

YouTube Video: Barack Obama In SF February 19th, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CZvKtBRe3Q>

Proud Democrat



Renew your 2007 Membership Today!
Please disregard, if dues has been paid)

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www.mgoclub.org

P.O. Box 11622,
Oakland, CA 94611



Democratic Club

MGO

MGO Membership Information

JOIN NOW

Remit dues annually in January

Membership options:

Senior/Student \$20 Individual \$30 Family \$45

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>

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

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



You have the
POWER to
save democracy
Join or Renew Today!

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>