

SAVE-THE-DATE

MGO'S NOVEMBER 15TH EVENT:
TRANSPORTATION FUNDING--Prop. 91, **COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE**--Prop. 92 and **TERM LIMITS**--Prop. 93

PEACE RESOLUTION will be presented to the MGO membership

Endorsement votes will be taken
Thursday, November 15th, 7:30 p.m.

 Piedmont Gardens, [110-41st Street, Oakland](#);
 For more information, go to www.mgoclub.org
FALL SOCIAL with Congresswoman Barbara Lee
Friday, Nov. 16th, 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

 Celebrating Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club's 52nd anniversary
 Inés Vargas Fraenkel's [home, 1002 Ashmount Avenue, Oakland, 94610](#).

Sponsored by the Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club and Co-Sponsored by MGO Democratic Club. MGO members will receive the same \$10 admission discount that our ACDL club members receive.

 For more information go to www.Demolawyers.org or www.mgoclub.org
MGO'S End of the Year Party
Demystifying the Presidential Election
Sunday, December 2nd 2007, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

 You are cordially invited to the home of Margaret & Winton McKibben's
[lovely home](#) at [170 Roble Road, Oakland](#)

 For more information contact:
 Terry Sandoval, 520-7133 or tsandoval59@mac.com.

President's Message, Nov. 2007

You have probably seen the letters in the Montclairion and Oakland Tribune related to MGO's endorsement of Sheila Kuehl's health care bill. It is good for our club to get this publicity, and it gives us a chance to educate voters a bit. If you want to be ready to talk about Kuehl's bill with friends and acquaintances, check out our website.



Your board is also taking other action: Pamela Drake asked that the board join her in trying to follow up on the governor's veto of AB 45, which would have brought local control back to Oakland schools. (The club endorsed AB 45.) At the e-board's request, Pamela is writing a resolution, which will request that the State Superintendent of Schools come to Oakland for a town hall meeting at which he will tell us what will be necessary for us to regain local control. The e-board will work with Pamela to get the support of the City Council and other community organizations for the resolution.

You will have a chance to take action on several issues at November's meeting:

Your board is unanimously bringing to you a Peace Resolution prepared at the board's request by VP Dan Kalb. We hope many of you will be present for the discussion on our Peace Resolution. We believe that this resolution is the best way for our club to show its commitment to ending the war in Iraq.

(continues pg. 2)

The Platform

Volume 11 Issue 11, Nov. 2007

Officers

 Judy Cox, President
 510.595.7402
judyacox@comcast.net

 Dan Kalb, Vice-President
dankl@well.com

 Greg Chan, Secretary
chanlimclan@sbcglobal.net

 Stephen Statler, Treasurer
stephen.statler@att.net

 Gary Sirbu, Past President
gsirbulaw@aol.com
At Large Board Members

 Jean Brown, (Membership)
jbr936@aol.com

 Guy Bryant,
guybryant@BryantBrownLaw.com

 Marcus Johnson, (Media Coordinator)
 510.290.8300
marcus_a_johnson@yahoo.com

 Ralph Kanz
rkanz@earthlink.net

 Wayne Nishioka
wsnishioka@aol.com

 Terry Preston (Webmaster)
leroy_dad@yahoo.com

 Terry Sandoval
tsandoval59@mac.com

 Robert Warwick
rhwarwick@yahoo.com
Inside:

- President's Message (continues)
- MGO General Meeting Notes (9/21)
- MGO Executive Meeting Minutes
- The Tyranny of the Two Thirds Vote ...
- PROP 13 Reform, Anyone?
- Meet Our Board members
- Special Events (of interest)
- Calendar of Events (back page)

Contribute event and activity notices of interest to Democrats and articles to the Platform Newsletter, but please limit submissions to 300 words.

 Platform Editor: Marcus Johnson,
 Send comments and suggestions to: marcus_a_johnson@yahoo.com

Labor Donated

Next General Meeting Nov. 15th

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.mgoclub.org

 P.O. Box 11622,
 Oakland, CA 94611

Calendar of Events
Nov. 13th, Tuesday, at 7:00 pm, City of Alameda Democratic Club (CADC) at Alameda Hospital 2070 Clinton Avenue, Conference Room "C" (1st Floor), Alameda. www.alameda-demo.org
Nov. 9th, Friday at Noon, Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club, next meeting, Assembly Member Loni Hancock (Dist. 14); RSVP by email to Steve Tidrick, Pres., club@demlawyers.org; Zazoo's, 15 Embarcadero W, Oakland; <http://www.demlawyers.org/>
Nov. 14th, Wednesday, at 7:00 pm, Alameda County Central Committee, 300 Estudillo Ave., San Leandro. More info at <http://www.acdems.org/>
Nov. 15th, Thursday, MGO General meeting at Piedmont Gardens, 110-41st Street, Oakland www.mgoclub.org
Nov. 19th, Monday, at 7:00 pm, TriValley Democratic Club IBEW Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy, Dublin; <http://www.trivalleydems.com/>
Nov. 19th, Monday, MGO Executive Board meeting at Piedmont Gardens.

Contact the Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club (WDRC) Membership Meeting, 390 27th Street, Oakland. <http://www.wellstoneclub.org/>
Contact the DEMOS Democratic Club, Westminster Hills Church, 27287 Patrick Avenue, Hayward; <http://www.haywarddemos.org/>
Nov. 27th, Tuesday, Castro Valley Democratic Club, 7:00PM at the Faith Lutheran Church 20080 Redwood Rd. Graydon Room; <http://www.ebdir.net/cvdemos/>
Every Thursday, 7:00PM, Cal Berkeley Democrats, Berkeley Campus, 170 Barrows Hall Berkeley; <http://www.caldems.com/>
Tell a friend about a MGO Membership!

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

Membership is open to registered Democrats. Benefits include monthly newsletter, invitation to special events, political programs and working with other active Democrats.

We are actively seeking new members and renewing current with the following membership options:

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

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

 Download our Membership form here:
<http://www.mgoclub.org/member.htm>

 Mail dues to:
 P.O. Box 11622, Oakland, CA 94611

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

President's message (continues)

Earlier, some individuals had asked that MGO support Resolution Peace. After researching Resolution Peace, your board was concerned that it was a broad coalition including a number of organizations, which are narrowly focused on issues other than peace in Iraq. In addition, we were concerned that Resolution Peace does not state how action proposed by its leaders will be vetted by the member organizations—your e-board was concerned that that was too much of a “blank check” about deciding on actions. The board decided that Resolution Peace was not the choice we could recommend.

Our November program features speakers on the three state measures included on the February Presidential primary ballot: term limits, community college governance and funding, and transportation funding. After the presentations, we will vote to endorse—or not endorse—these measures.

As we work together to forge decisions on these issues, I'd like to ask that we all try to maintain respect for each other—we all feel passionate about many of these issues, but resorting to insults or charges of bad faith in the heat of argument loses the goodwill of other club members and weakens our ability to be effective as a club.

Judy Cox, President

MGO Goals: to spread knowledge of candidates, legislation, issues, and other matters of interest to the Democratic Party; to find, promote and support Democratic candidates; to provide a forum for Democratic candidates and officials; to stimulate public interest in governmental affairs; and to perpetuate the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party.

Special Notice

M—Movin' and G—Groovin' O—On!

MGO's monthly general meetings will move to the Dimond Library starting in January 2008. Stay tuned for details in next month's Platform.



PEACE RESOLUTION

presented to MGO Democratic Club

WHEREAS, George W. Bush and senior members of his Administration mislead American citizens about weapons of mass destruction, failed to allow United Nations inspectors sufficient time to do their job, and unnecessarily led us into a counter-productive war against an already-neutered dictator; and

WHEREAS, our ongoing presence in Iraq is costing not only the lives of young men and women in combat, but also hundreds of billions of dollars that could be used to meet critical health, education and human service needs in Oakland and throughout California and the entire country; and

WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of Californians—including 82% of Democrats—disapprove of George W. Bush's disastrous Iraq war policies and overwhelmingly support a safe and time-certain withdrawal of American troops from Iraq;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Greater Oakland (MGO) Democratic Club supports (1) a timely and orderly withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, taking due care for the safety of our military personnel and the Iraqi civilian population; (2) improved American and international efforts to achieve a lasting diplomatic solution to the conflict; (3) full funding necessary to meet the medical and mental health needs of the troops, veterans and their immediate families; and (4) no military attack on Iran without justifiable cause and explicit Congressional authorization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Greater Oakland (MGO) Democratic Club send this resolution to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, CDP Chair Art Torres, the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee, the '08 Democratic Presidential candidates, and the presidents of each chartered Democratic club in the East Bay asking them to become active supporters of Congressional action needed to accomplish the above.

MGO E-Board Action Taken: 10/22/07 – Recommended for Approval by the MGO Club membership at the November General Meeting.

MGO Executive Board Meeting (9/24)

MSP: Sept. 24th minutes.

Item: Term Limits--Prop. 93, Transportation Funding--Prop. 91 & Community College Funding and Governance--Prop. 92

Action: MSP, The 3 ballot measures will be discussed at the upcoming Nov. meeting. Judy Cox will continue to seek representatives of the opposing sides. Endorsement votes on the above noted measures will be taken.

Item: AB 45, Local control of the Oakland Unified School District

Action: MSP, A resolution will be submitted to the City Council seeking a hearing and a public process, which would include the participation of Superintendent J. O'Connell, to develop a pathway to return the Oakland Unified School District to local control.

Item: Peace Resolution, approve the 2nd draft resolution as amended at the last Sept. 24th Executive Board meeting.

Action: MSP, present it to the membership for a vote, with a recommendation to adopt.

Greg Chan, MGO Secretary

MGO General Meeting Notes: (10/18)

The general meeting program consisted of a panel discussion of journalists following Oakland government titled "Ron Dellums' First 200 Days: A Press Take on the Mayor."

Our October general meeting program panelist included Chip Johnson, San Francisco Chronicle; Jessie Allen-Taylor, Berkeley Daily Planet and Robert Gammon, East Bay Express.

Unfortunately, Kelly Rayburn, of the Oakland Tribune was unable to attend the meeting.



40+ members attended the October general meeting and about 70+ non-members attended.

More program pictures are available for viewing at www.mgoclub.org. Our next general meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 15th.

MGO Club membership benefits include this newsletter, invitations to special events while supporting progressive Democratic politics.

The Tyranny of the Two Thirds Vote.....

Loni Hancock

Assembly Member, 14th District

The Tyranny of the Two Thirds Vote....Arcane Rule Allows the Budget to Be Held Hostage.

Fifty days after it was constitutionally required, the Governor signed California's state budget. This year's budget gridlock is directly linked to an arcane rule that requires a two-thirds vote by the Legislature to send the Governor a budget.

California is one of only three states in the nation with this inefficient and undemocratic rule. Unfortunately, this rule allows a handful of legislators (in this year's case – two state senators) to hold up the passage of the entire state budget until they got policy changes and budget cuts.

California's two-thirds requirement concentrates power not with the majority of Legislators who want to pass an on-time socially responsible budget, but in the hands of a few who choose to take an irrational ideological stance. This handful of Legislators knows they can hold out for as long as they want extracting non-budget related concessions. This system allows these Legislators to hold the budget hostage for pork barrel projects in their districts or tax breaks for their industry friends while simultaneously holding hostage funding for state services for Californians, such as road construction, healthcare programs for the elderly, daycare for children, school supplies for public schools and college grants for students. It's unconscionable.

There is a misdemeanor arraignment court and Does it make sense for socially responsible budget

PROP 13 REFORM, ANYONE? From the Proposition 13 Reform Task Force

The Proposition 13 Reform Task Force is alive and well and is moving forward on its mission! That mission is to spark an initiative campaign to remove non-residential commercial property owners (e.g. oil and financial companies, big businesses, and retail businesses) from Proposition 13 tax rate protection so that these property owners will pay their fair share. Equally important, billions of dollars of additional tax revenue will flow into the State of California treasury and then become available for local government needs such as parks, police, and education. The tax rate for homeowners, condominium owners, and apartment owners will not be changed.

The Task Force is currently made up of representatives from Democratic clubs from various parts of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and we've met throughout the summer and early fall. We are continuing to organize and gather information. We have met with a staff person from the Alameda County Assessor's office, elected officers, and opened a bank account.

crafted by a majority of legislators to be thwarted by a handful of legislators who want to sit on their hands and hold the state hostage?

The two-thirds vote requirement is a bizarre rule. The United States Congress requires a simple majority vote. Forty seven states require a simple majority to pass their budgets. Only three states, including California, have the two thirds vote requirement. Who are the other two states that require two thirds vote to pass a budget? Rhode Island and Arkansas. That's right, Rhode Island, home to just over one million residents and Arkansas whose budget is barely \$13 billion. Compare that to California - home to nearly 40 million people, with a state budget of over \$145 billion, the third largest state in our nation, the world's fifth largest economy, has modeled its state budget process after Rhode Island and Arkansas.

The two-thirds vote requirement is - without exception - the primary reason why the budget consistently fails to meet the constitutional deadline. There is still conflict and debate in a majority vote system but it is not the same kind of poisonous, partisan gridlock created by allowing a small minority of legislators to dominate the budget process.

Californians want an on-time and socially responsible budget. In a democracy, the majority ought to determine how to raise and spend the money we pool to buy together what we can't afford to buy separately - such as schools, roads, bus and train systems, police and fire protection. In a democracy, the majority should determine what the best budget is for the people of California.

Our Speaker's Committee has put hard work into preparing a model presentation for speakers to continue our outreach efforts to more Democratic clubs and allied organizations. We have been asking questions and getting answers from the assessor's office, and of course, doing lots of googling. That presentation will be finalized very soon and we will be looking for speakers to present it.

Our Outreach Committee is working on plans to involve Democratic clubs throughout the state in this reform effort. We are also reaching out to many other groups that will be key to our efforts to persuade labor organizations and other groups to place an initiative on the 2010 statewide ballot.

We have done a lot of work and there is much more ahead. Volunteers would be most welcome! If you can join us, contact our chair, Gary Sirbu, at (510) 336-3373.

We can also email you our Proposition 13 reform resolution, available for you to bring

Meet our MGO Board Members

Gary Sirbu, Immediate Past President

Gary grew up in San Francisco and then attended U.C. Berkeley, majoring in anthropology. He received his law degree from U.C.'s Boalt Hall and then worked for several years as an Alameda County Assistant Public Defender.

At that office he co-founded the Alameda County Public Defenders Association. He entered private law practice after gaining State Bar certification as a specialist in criminal law. Gary married MGO member Ellen Sirbu when she was a grad student in nutrition and he was still in law school. They married right after graduation.

Marcus Johnson, At-Large Board Member

A lifetime Oakland resident, Marcus is a small business (Public Relations) owner servicing the real estate industry. Prior to starting his own business, he worked in the technology field, designing information security products, medical devices and touch screens.

Currently, his involvements include Newsletter Editor/Media Coordinator of the MGO Democratic Club; member of Port of Oakland-Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan Task Force, City of Oakland Blue Ribbon Commission, Measure Y/Violence Prevention and Public Safety committee, volunteer with Rebuilding Together Oakland, active in public safety advocacy and land use groups.

to Democratic clubs and other organizations to endorse. It spells out our mission in greater detail. To get a copy, email Helen Black at BBlack5855@aol.com, entering "Request Prop 13 Resolution" on your message subject line.

Submitted by Gary Sirbu

Alameda County Democratic Lawyers Club Friday, November 9, 2007, Noon Luncheon featuring Assembly Member Loni Hancock (Dist. 14), RSVP by email to Steve Tidrick, Pres., club@demlawyers.org; Zazoo's, 15 Embarcadero W, Oakland; <http://www.demlawyers.org/>

The Presidential Debate: Democrats

Thursday, Nov. 15th, Las Vegas, Nevada

Sponsored by CNN

Co-sponsor: Nevada Democratic Party