

The Rossmoor Democrat

Northern California's Largest Democratic Club

Volume 2014 Issue 1

Marilyn Davin, Otto Schnepf, Co-Editors

January-February 2014

January General Meeting

Thursday, January 30

Social Hour - 2:30pm; Program - 3:00pm

Event Center, Tahoe Room

February Dinner Meeting

Sunday, February 23

Social Hour-5pm; Dinner-6pm; Program-7pm

Fireside Room, Gateway

DoR will hold a candidates' forum at its Jan. 30 monthly membership meeting. Note: this is the 5th Thursday of the month!

Stanford Professor Larry Diamond will speak at the **Sunday, February 23**, DoR monthly membership dinner meeting. Please note that this meeting, sponsored jointly by DoR and the Rossmoor Stanford Club, will be held on Sunday instead of the usual fourth Thursday of the month. The dinner will be in the Fireside Room and will begin at 5pm



with a social hour, followed by dinner at 6pm and Diamond's presentation at 7pm.

Larry Diamond is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and director of the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law. He is also faculty co-director of the Haas Center for Public Service. He teaches about comparative democratic development and post-conflict democracy building. In 2007, Professor Diamond was named Teacher of the Year and received the University's Dinkelspiel Award for Distinctive Contributions to Undergraduate Education. His latest book, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies throughout the World*, explores the sources of global democratic progress and stress and the prospects for future democratic expansion.

What Has Become of the "Arab Spring?"

Nearly three years ago, mass protests in Tunisia

launched a cascade of change in the Arab world that has toppled four dictators and provoked far-reaching political changes in the region. However, with the exception of Tunisia--an uncertain political experiment still in the making--protests have not led to democracy, but rather to profound political polarization and crisis in Egypt, crushing repression in Bahrain, a complicated national dialogue conference in another deeply divided country, Yemen, and a devastating civil war in Syria. Yet Arab citizens continue to desire greater political freedom, accountability, and choice--in short, some form of democracy. In this talk, Larry Diamond will review the current state of the Arab Spring and the prospects for democracy and political stability in key Arab countries.

A sign-up form for the dinner appears on page 6 of this newsletter. Please note the deadline for payment. Everyone is welcome at all DoR events, regardless of political affiliation.

DoR Member Recalls Working with February Speaker—Professor Diamond

Carolyn Kramer

When I moved to California from New York, I treated myself to a course offered in Stanford's Continuing Education program: "Democracy in Developing Countries." I walked to class from my new home near my daughter, in Palo Alto. And the instructor, Larry Diamond, was a dream. Active and knowledgeable, he examined how dictatorship, not democracy, was the way of the world. I loved his course so much I

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President Jane Walter's Message



I hope that my first message as your Club President finds you happy and successful in all your many activities at the dawn of this critical mid-term election year. I am excited about our Club's busy year ahead. We will continue the many activities begun during

Gary Hansen's tenure as our President: Our movie program, Progressive Voices discussion groups, our popular monthly speaker meetings, and others.

Our Club's Speakers Committee continues to search for engaging and articulate speakers for our monthly membership meetings. At our November meeting we asked you directly to suggest topics of interest. In order of preference, the topics most often selected were 1) Citizen's United and Crony Capitalism 2) Prison sentencing and reform 3) Corporate Welfare and the minimum wage 4) women's issues, and 5) climate change. We are seeking to address these issues and others. Many thanks for your input.

We have a special guest speaker at our February dinner meeting, which will be held on **Sunday, February 23rd**, instead of the usual fourth Thursday of the month. Stanford University Sociology and Political Science Professor Larry Diamond will speak to us on the topic "What has become of the Arab Spring?" DoR is jointly sponsoring this special Sunday meeting with the Stanford Club of Rossmoor. Be sure to mark your calendars and look for upcoming announcements concerning this dinner, especially since it will be on a Sunday instead of on the usual fourth Thursday.

We will be undertaking two new initiatives this year. The first is the DoR Book Club, which was launched on January 6th at the Dollar Clubhouse. There were about 25 people in attendance, so many that the club may split into two discussion groups. The Club will meet again on the first Monday in February and discuss *Trailblazer*, the recent Jerry Brown biography written by Chuck McFadden. Because of the enthusiastic response at our first session, we anticipate that this new effort will be a great success.

Our second initiative will be something different—a grassroots political effort to make a real difference in the outcome of the Congressional elections in the November Mid-term Election. At the time of this writing we do not know who will be running for Miller's seat in the House nor do we

know what actions our Club might wish to take on behalf of any of the candidates. We do know, however, that next door to us in Congressional District 10, which includes all of Stanislaus and part of San Joaquin County, Tea Party Republican Jeff Denham unfortunately defeated his Democratic opponent in the last General Election. This district is unique in the country in that it voted for Barack Obama for President but chose a Republican to represent them in the House of Representatives. Denham may be vulnerable after voting for the very unpopular government shutdown in October – an opportunity for his Democratic challenger, Michael Eggman. Eggman is a third-generation local businessman, bee



From Left: Cindy Ware, Michael Eggman, Jane Walter, Patricia Sharaf,

keeper, and farmer who supports a liberal Democratic agenda. Several of our board members met with Eggman and his campaign manager in December and were very impressed with him as an articulate and dedicated candidate. As I write this, Eggman is scheduled to

speak at our January 30th Candidates' Forum. Be sure to come meet him and hear him speak. Working with Eggman's campaign manager, we will be planning some activities here in Rossmoor to support his campaign.

I urge all of you to participate in these activities. Although the recent budget compromise headed off the immediate threat of another budget shutdown, it ignored the much deeper issues of our country's income inequality and the need for tax reform. Corporate welfare, tax havens and privileges for the wealthiest 1% remain untouched. The only way to make progress on these issues and other parts of President Obama's agenda is to win back the House from the Republicans. Democrats in Rossmoor, as elsewhere in the country, are frustrated with Republican blockages in Congress of everything and anything the President supports. But now we have a chance to make a difference. Together we can do something right here in Rossmoor which could reverse the outcome of the 2012 General Election and get our government moving again. These activities will be announced in our Club-wide

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We Can Help Turn the House of Representatives Back to Blue

Cindy Ware

Tired of wringing your hands over the most unproductive U.S. House on record? What would you do to remove John Boehner from the Speaker's podium? Democrats need to turn 17 House seats from red to blue to reclaim the majority in the House. One of them is right next door to us and needs our help!

Think back a minute to eight years ago in the 2006 mid-term election, when local energy scientist Jerry McNerney - with the help of legions of grassroots volunteers - accomplished what many considered the impossible: He beat long-time rancher and 6-term Republican incumbent from Tracy, Richard Pombo, who was also Chair of the House Resources Committee, with additional oversight of Natural Resources.

Now fast forward to this mid-term election: We as volunteers can help beat one-term Tea Party incumbent Republican Jeff Denham in the Tracy – Modesto district (now redrawn as Congressional District [CD]10) - by working for and ensuring the victory of Democratic challenger Michael Eggman, an articulate third-generation Turlock businessman, almond rancher and bee keeper who knows his district from the ground up: He trucks his many bee hives from ranch to ranch every spring, getting to know his constituents better at every stop.

You can read Michael Eggman's positions on line under "Issues" on his website: eggmanforcongress.com, or you can google "Eggman for Congress" to reach his official site. Better yet, you can also hear him in person at the DoR Candidates' Forum at 3 pm on Thursday, January 30.

Among his key positions, Eggman:

- Supports extending jobless benefits and raising the minimum wage.
- Supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for otherwise law-abiding residents, ensures that farmers and agribusiness have the access to labor they need, increases visas for highly skilled workers to give American business access to skilled labor here at home, penalizes businesses and contractors who knowingly hire undocumented workers, and better secures our border to eliminate illegal trafficking and keep dangerous criminals out of our country.
- Supports Medicare and Social Security and "will never vote to balance our budget on the backs of our seniors."
- Encourages growing the economy here at home, not shipping jobs overseas, by ending tax give-

ways for businesses that send American jobs overseas.

- Favors tax credits for renewable energy.

How are chances looking for Michael Eggman? Current Tea Partier Jeff Denham voted to shut down the government, which was very unpopular in CD 10. A poll in October by the reputable nationwide firm Public Policy Polling stated:

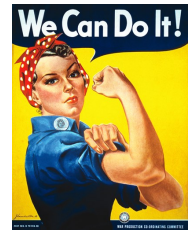
"In an initial head to head match-up, Denham nabs 44 percent of the vote, with his Democratic opponent also pulling 44 percent. However, after hearing about Denham's pro-shutdown votes, Jeff Denham loses re-election to his Democratic opponent by 4 percentage points with 44 percent of the vote going to Denham and 48 percent of the vote toward his challenger."

We as individuals can work to support Michael Eggman in his election bid and help take back Congress with both our financial support and by volunteering for his campaign. Check for announcements of phone banks and mailing parties here in Rossmoor this spring and fall. For further information, contact: Cindy Ware,

956-1743 or cindyware@mac.com.

WE CAN DO IT!

TURN CD 10 BLUE!



It's Back to School

Emily Ehm



Things have been quiet with DoR's Turner School Committee since we raised over \$7,000 for the school at our ever-popular, always-sold-out October Extravaganza. But with the new year upon us we have a small group going out to Anti-och's Turner Elementary School to tutor on either Tuesday or Thursday mornings. If you are interested and would like to join us call Irene McKeever at 932-6475 or me at 943-7610. We promise fun outings and good lunches in addition to all the work we do for our adopted school and its hard-working teachers.

I send you all my best wishes for a successful new school year.

Remember to check out DoR's new website at democratsofrossmoor.org for a calendar of Club events, contact information for our elected officials, and other important information.

Reminders from Jon Foyt

1. Published Writers

If you are a published writer you are welcome to display and sell your books at DoR's regular monthly membership meetings. A special table set up for this purpose easily accommodates three or 4 writers. To reserve a space call Jon Foyt ahead of time or email him at jonfoyt@mac.com

2. Progressive Voices Discussion Groups

Everyone in Rossmoor is welcome to attend DoR's Progressive Voices monthly discussion group on the third Wednesday of every month at 7 pm at Creekside, rooms 1 and 2. Most sessions are presented by members who have researched a particular topic. Everyone then has the opportunity to ask questions and join in the discussion. These meetings were created and designed to inform Rossmoorians of important civic and political issues that concern us all. For more information call Jon Foyt at 322-3064.

Newer Members: Welcome Aboard

Emily Ehm, DoR Membership Chair

If you are a newer member of the DoR you are cordially invited to an informal meeting on Tuesday, February 25, at Multi-Purpose Room 3 at 4 pm. This casual meeting will go over some of the many activities available to Democrats and there will be an opportunity to meet some other new members and some of our board members.



There will be refreshments served (wine, cider, cheese, crackers) and a chance to ask questions, so the event won't be all business.

You'll receive a phone call and an email reminder to help you keep this in mind. And even if you joined a long time ago and would like a refresher on what goes on around here, you are just as welcome. We Democrats welcome everyone!

Questions? Call me at 943-7610 or email me at emilybondehm@gmail.com

DoR Treasurer's Report

Mary Harvey

Interesting!



We, the Democrats of Rossmoor, have added activities, paid more for speakers, started distributing the newsletter through the Internet and increased our membership.

Our meeting expenses, including room set-ups, speakers, and hospitality were a little over \$6,000. Membership income was nearly \$11,000, as compared with just under \$8,000 in 2012. Newsletter expenses were down at \$1,270, instead of \$1,977 in 2012.

Other expenses included publicity, postage, club permits, and our new website. Many of our events are self-supporting--movie showings, and special events like dinners (which, in some cases have turned out to be fundraisers).

We have nearly \$6,000 in the bank - more than at the end of 2012. If you would like a detailed DoR Profit and Loss Statement, e-mail me at mhmaryharvey@gmail.com or call me at 952-9040.

New DoR Committee Tackles Thorny Issues

Sue De Carlo



In recent months many groups in and outside of Rossmoor have asked the Democrats of Rossmoor to support various issues and activities. The volume of such requests has reached a point where neither the President nor board members can give them adequate attention in the course of normal board business. Therefore, the board has created the Issue Review Committee, which is chaired by board member Patsy Sharaf. Members of the committee will be chosen from the general membership as well as from the board itself.

The purpose of the Issue Review Committee is to research issues and proposals brought to the DoR for the Club's support or endorsement. The Issue Review Committee will interview the backers of such issues, research the topics, and make a recommendation to the board based on what is learned. The board will then vote either to support the issue or not. If support is agreed upon the board will determine the appropriate actions to take. These may be limited to publication of the issue to membership or as involved as actually forming groups to work in the community in support of the issue, or simply urging monetary support. No action with regard to publica-

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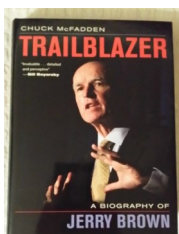
e-mails, our bi-monthly newsletter, the Rossmoor News, on our new website (democratsofrossmoor.org), and at our monthly meetings. So please check them regularly and join other Club members in working to turn our House of Representatives from obstructive to constructive, from **Red** to **Blue**.

Best Wishes,

Jane Walter

DoR Kicks off Book Club

Jane Walter



Our Club is sponsoring a book club to read and discuss books about American political, economic and social topics. The first meeting was held with an overflow crowd on January 3rd. The book club has decided to read *Trailblazer*, a biography of Jerry Brown by Chuck McFadden. McFadden will speak at the Democrats of Rossmoor's monthly meeting in March, so there will be an opportunity to meet this author. Two members of the book club have offered to lead our discussion groups for this book next month.



Jane Walter with members at first book club meeting

The book club will next meet on Monday, February 3rd at 3:00pm, upstairs in the Eisenhower room at Dollar Club house. We will select books for the next few months from a list that was distributed to attendees at the January meeting. Several copies of this list will be available on the Democrats'shelf in the Rossmoor Library - or you can

email Jane Walter for a copy.

Everyone is welcome at the new DoR book club. Club membership is not required to join. If you have any questions, please call Jane Walter at 925-945-1429 or e-mail her at walterjane4@yahoo.com

Continued from page 1 (Kramer)

waylaid him after a class and asked if he could use my typing prowess in his work (I've been playing the piano since I was 6; my teachers would be pleased to learn that practicing scales had made me a whiz at the typewriter...).

Professor Diamond could use my help! His typ-



ist had injured her wrist and I slipped into her post and began reading incoming manuscripts and typing notes about them. It was great fun and the material he discussed was fascinating to me.

But, as it always does, time went on. I married and moved away from Palo Alto, and Larry took my husband and me to a lovely farewell dinner when I retired from working with him. I've heard him speak on NPR, on occasion with Terri Gross, and I have his latest book, *The Spirit of Democracy, the Struggle to Build Freedom*, on my book shelf. He is still examining how governments around the world get to democracy, sustain it and make it work. And he's still a dream.

Riding the Kindertransport

as told to Marilyn Davin

Two recent theatrical productions explore a child's experience during the Holocaust: the film "The Book Thief," and the Berkeley Repertory production "The Pianist of Willesden Lane." Like the pianist's autobiographical story in the Berkeley Rep production, former Rossmoor resident Ellen Nebel, at age 13, escaped Nazi Germany with her 10-year-old brother on the last Kindertransport train to leave Hanover. Before she moved away from Rossmoor I audiotaped her childhood memories of that time. The following is excerpted from that interview.



Children arriving in England from Vienna by Kindertransport in undated photograph.

I was born in Hanover on March 6, 1925. My sister Marga and brother Peter are still alive in England. I'm always homesick for England. They saved our lives. I wouldn't be sitting here if they hadn't let us in. I'm never homesick for Germany or Holland.

Hitler promised to kill all Jews if they were still in Germany after a certain time. Each city was allowed a certain number for the Kindertransport. Hanover was allowed to have ten children – which wasn't very much. A wonderful Dutch woman, Mrs. Weissmuller – she's on the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles – already had eight. She walked by our home and thought "Mr. Weinberg has two children who would fit into this age." The age limit was 14 and my older sister was already 15. I was 13 and my brother Peter was 10.

Continued on page 7 (Nebel)

February's Annual Dinner is on Sunday

Sunday, February 23, 2014, Fireside, Gateway
Social Hour - 5pm; Dinner - 6pm; Program - 7pm
Catered by Simple Elegance
Cost \$27 per person

Dinner Menu:

Appetizers: Stuffed Mushrooms, Meatballs, Bacon and Cheese
Sourdough Melts

Salad: Mixed Greens with Mandarin Oranges, Toasted Almonds and Cider
Vinaigrette

Entrées (choose one):

Pan Seared Tenderloin Tips with Red Wine Mushroom Sauce
Teriyaki Chicken with Grilled Pineapple and Carmelized Onion
Spinach and Ricotta Cannelloni - Vegetarian

DEMOCRATS OF ROSSMOOR DINNER FEB. 23

Name _____ Choice of entrée _____

Name _____ Choice of entrée _____
(Tenderloin Tips, Chicken or Vegetarian)

Telephone Number _____

\$27 per person. Total Amount Submitted \$ _____ **Reserve by Feb. 18 .**

Please make your check out to: Democrats of Rossmoor – send to Jeanne Thomas
2115 Cactus Court #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94594 OR leave in the Democrats of
Rossmoor Mail Box at Gateway.

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tion of materials, requests for member action or monetary support, or formal position of the Club will be taken before the board has heard the Issue Review Committee's recommendation and voted on the subject. The Issue Review Committee is independent of and separate from any other committees formed by the Democrats of Rossmoor.

It is the hope of the committee members to ease the time-consuming burden of the DoR board and, at the same time, provide both a forum and a system where progressive issues can be brought to the attention of the board and general membership in a constructive manner leading to effective action.

If you'd like to join us, call either myself at 210-1039, or Patsy Sharaf at 322-8926.

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Continued from page 5 (Nebel)

My parents had just one night to make up their minds. I've asked my sister what that was like and she would never speak of it, didn't want to talk about it. My father fought in World War I and had bullets in his body until the day he died. I have loads of pictures of him in the German Army. I kept a few, and some are in the Holocaust Museum in Washington. In one he was on the Russian Front on New Years in 1914 with all his German buddies. And for all that we were thrown out of Germany or killed.

Mrs. Weissmuller told us to be ready, air raid sirens went off all day long. Buses picked us up and drove us. On the bus there were constant air raids. We saw German guys jumping out of planes-German soldiers. That's why I'm such a Nervous Nelly today, from all that turmoil.

At 13, I was a real child. I wasn't like the children here at 13, who look like 30. My brother was 10 years old – a little boy in short pants like they wore in Germany. We never talked about it with our parents. It must have been dreadful. Mrs. Weissmuller took our busload to a harbor in Holland and said "See that big ship in the back? I want you all to run to it." I packed a suitcase but we couldn't run with it so we threw it in the ditch. I had made my brother Peter put on two jackets. We ran to the ship – a good long way – and we waited. We were just children – hundreds of children. This was not a passenger ship, it was a cargo ship. So there were no beds, no nothing. We slept in the hold, way, way down. A couple died because they got up in the night to go to the bathroom and fell into the hold. There was no food on that ship. We got what was called in England water biscuits – here they're

called crackers. We couldn't eat them in the day because many had worms in them. We ate them in the night. The toilets were all overflowing. And there was not even an adult in charge to tell us where we were going. Six days. Usually it takes half a day to go from Holland to England. But we didn't go to England – we went to Ireland. And in Ireland they said go back, nobody gets off the ship.

So we turned around and England took us in as war refugees. We landed in Liverpool. We were driving on the wrong side of the street. There wasn't a word we knew. First we were in hostels and worked in a factory making soldiers' uniforms. So we learned English, though the women we worked with were really ignorant. I hate to say this because I love England with a deep love, but they would ask us "Is Hitler really as bad as they say?" Then I signed up to work on a hostel in Scotland so my brother Peter and I could be together. We all got very bad backs from the farm work. We lifted hundredweights of sugar beets and haymaking, we stuck our forks in the hay and lifted it up to the wagon. It was too heavy for us, we were just children. My brother learned to be a shoemaker. All of us girls worked in the kitchen and the laundry, we ironed for 150 people. I learned how to iron everything on a table instead of an ironing board. I still iron on a table. I was sent to a huge house in Liverpool that got all the children from the concentration camps [at that time probably referring to enemy alien internment camps – ed.]. They wouldn't speak to me because I was German. To them I wasn't Jewish, I was German. These children had been living like animals, eating God-knows-what, and I was the hated German to them. I found the Eastern European Jews more sympathetic, more warm. Before Hitler, German Jews considered Eastern European Jews to be low-lives or farmers. I know that isn't true because of all the bright people I met there. Now it's all a mish-mash, like a pot with stew.

I didn't see my parents again until I was married and pregnant with my own child. My mother was waiting for me at the consulate in Ankara and saw me through the window. I could hear her high heels – she wore heels 'til the day she died – and I could hear her cluck cluck clucking across the floor before we fell into each other's arms. It was very odd seeing her as a child then coming back as a grown woman. You can't make up those years just like that. My mother gave piano lessons and my father taught German to British soldiers stationed in Turkey. They moved to Stockton in 1952 and we came in 1954. I became an American citizen in 1955.

We were the children then. When we are gone this will all kind of fade in the background and be just a page in history.

Democrats of Rossmoor
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2014 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Use this form to join or renew membership in DEMOCRATS OF ROSSMOOR. Dues are \$20 per member. Dues cover one calendar year, January 1 through December 31, and include our newsletter.

PLEASE CHECK ONE: New member Returning member

Please print

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

=====

Can you be an occasional volunteer? From time to time the Democrats of Rossmoor could use help with various tasks such as serving on committees or the Board of Directors, or helping with: 1) mailings, 2) voter registration, 3) social events, or 4) service groups. Please circle any item where you can devote some time.

Place your check (payable to Democrats of Rossmoor) and this form in an envelope and:

- (1) leave it in the Democrats' mailbox during office hours at Gateway,
- (2) mail it to Emily Ehm, 2324 Ptarmigan Drive, Apt. 2, Walnut Creek, CA 94595 or
- (3) bring your check and this form to the membership table at any meeting.

We thank you for joining / rejoining the Democrats of Rossmoor.