

**May, 2013
Contents**

Yolo Board of Education	1
Calendar/In Remembrance	2
Calif. Democratic Convention	3



DAVIS DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Yolo County Board of Education by Bill Owens, Board President



(front l-r) Anna Ferrera, Rep. Lowenthal, Bill Owens

If you are an engaged and well-informed citizen but don't know a heck of a lot about your County Office of Education (COE for short), you're not alone. While COEs play an important role in education and community life, for a number of reasons the majority of students and citizens have much less day-to-day contact with their COE than with their local school district. So let me tell you a little bit about the Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE) and the Yolo County Board of Education (Board).

To start, a quick word about governance. In Yolo County, like all but five counties in California, both the board and the superintendent are elected.

Each have distinct responsibilities and authority. For example, the superintendent is responsible for YCOE hiring and personnel decisions; while the board decides appeals from school district decisions regarding expulsions, inter-district transfer requests, and charter school petitions. In this co-governance environment, along with being clear about where decision-making authority resides, it is also important that this authority be exercised in a cooperative, respectful and mutually supportive manner, always with an eye toward reaching decisions and taking action that is in the best interests of education in Yolo County.

Dr. Jorge Ayala, in his fourth term as YCOE Superintendent, is elected countywide. The five Trustees are elected by Trustee Area, the boundaries of which are nearly the same as the five supervisorial districts. Sitting as the County Committee on School District Organization, during 2011 and 2012 the Board re-examined the Trustee Areas – as was done with supervisorial, assembly, congressional and other electoral districts – in light of the 2010 census. The Board also heard and decided requests from school districts to adjust their trustee area boundaries in light of the census data. These adjustments, like consideration of whether to transition from “at large” elections to “by trustee area” elections, are aimed at maintaining an electoral process that is in compliance with voting rights legislation, and that gives all voters an equal opportunity to select the governing board for the schools in their community.

As readers no doubt appreciate, pre-school is a vitally important component of child development. It is well established that programs like YCOE's Head Start and Early Head Start help families thrive and help our youngest children to learn and to be primed to learn more. Stimulated in part by the President's State of the Union address and proposed budget, there has been a lot of attention recently on universal pre-school. Along with keeping my fingers crossed with hope for increased federal funding for Head Start and other forms of pre-school, I am exploring with fellow trustees and others what we can do locally in Yolo County to make quality pre-school universally available and affordable.

In addition to my service on the Yolo County Board of Education, I am a member of the Board of Directors of Californians for School Facilities (CSF), a non-partisan advocacy group focused on federal legislation and programs that provide funding and other support for school facilities such as the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds and Qualified School Construction Bonds programs. Earlier this month I participated in CSF's visit to Washington, D.C., where we met with 20 Representatives (or their staff), the Dept. of Education and the Dept. of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. (Continued, p.2)

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Continued p. 3

Calendar of Events & Campaign Activities

Tues., May 7, 7:00-9:00 pm, regular DDC Board business meeting. Club members and the public are welcome: Pres. Sen and Secretary Yamagata draft the agenda. Davis Library on 14th Street.

Sunday, June 9 {save the date}, 11:00-2:00 pm, Champagne Brunch, The event will be hosted by Bill Julian and Robin Kulakow at their home at 43556 Almond Lane, Willowbank. The brunch includes a buffet provided by Board members and refreshments which will be followed by presentations featuring state and local elected officials. You are also invited to share your favorite dish.

In Remembrance of Oliver Northrup



Davis residents are shocked by the murder and saddened by the tragic loss of long time residents and community leaders, Oliver Northrup and Claudia Maupin. In addition to their many other activities, Oliver has long been an active member and supporter of the Davis Democratic Club

participating in the Club's events and election campaigns. Betty Weir remembers that Oliver "always served as the precinct leader in his neighborhood working to get out the vote." In remembrance, this photo shows Oliver with Mike Syvanen in a happier time volunteering on behalf of the Club at the Yolo County Fair during the 2012 campaign. While saddened by this loss, we are privileged to have known and worked with this wonderful person.

(Yolo County Board of Education, continued from p.1) In addition to an impromptu and very gracious meeting with our Congressman Garamendi's education staffer, we met with several freshmen California representatives who have a great deal of experience with school facilities and fully appreciate the multi-faceted benefits of good school facilities – enhanced learning, student health, teacher retention and workforce development as well as creating local jobs in multiple trades. A terrific example close to home of a federal program providing key support to an infrastructure project with educational benefits is a collaborative effort between Yolo County, YCOE, UC Davis, Yolo County school districts and SunPower. This solar power and educational project, which is funded in part through the Qualified Zone Academy Bond program, will support a series of energy academies at elementary, middle and high schools that will raise the level of students' environmental and technical literacy and enhance their workforce readiness. That will be a big win on multiple fronts. It will be the product of many hands in the public and private sectors, from local to federal, with credit due many, including our Yolo County Office of Education. Bill can be reached at <wlowens@cal.net>.

We've Only Just Begun

by Bob Schelen
Chair, Yolo County Democratic Party

Continued p. 2

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The theme of the 2013 California Democratic Party Convention was "We've Only Just Begun" highlighting not only our 2010 and 2012 election victories but reminding us that more work is needed to elect Democrats in 2014 and to fully implement policies that enjoy overwhelming public support, such as background checks to buy guns and protecting Social Security.

One highlight of the Convention was a full-day strategy meeting to develop plans to grow the party by coordinating better with local grassroots interests. We had wonderful attendance at this meeting, including DDC members, Tim Fenton and Andrew Kim. We worked with other counties in our newly configured Region to develop a coordinated approach for the 2014 elections and beyond. (To that end, the Yolo County Democratic Party will call a strategic planning meeting in early May.) There was a workshop that focused on online registration and how to use it to remind people that registering Democratic is the best option for those interested in issues concerning students, working families for examples. The Yolo County Democratic Central Committee presented our "We-Vote" project, a program that combines on-line registration efforts with the techniques of Organizing for America (OFA) and also coordinates the efforts of OFA and our local Democratic Party. This project's goals are to register at least, 3,000 new Democrats in Yolo County and 9,000 new Democrats in Congressional District 3. We ask the Davis Democratic Club to join us in this effort and thank the Club for the work already done on this project.

There were excellent speeches by Nancy Pelosi, State Senate President Protem Darrell Steinberg, Assembly Speaker John Perez, Insurance Commissioner Betty Yee and Secretary of State Debra Bowen, among many others. There was a call by environmental activist Tom Steyer for the 2/3rds Democratic majorities in our State Legislature to pass an oil severance tax. The issue is timely, he said, because of an anticipated rush to exploit California's Monterey Shale Formation. ***There has been a shale oil find in California that is the biggest in the United States. It is 15 million barrels. Now, I have no idea if that can be safely or profitably extracted. But I do know we better put in the tax before we find out.*** California is one of the few, if not the only oil producing state that **DOES NOT** have an oil-severance tax.

Barbara "Collins" Aldridge with the Our WalMart campaign gave an inspiring talk describing the effort to unionize WalMart workers. She cited the efforts WalMart is using to keep its workers from unionizing and the plight of the non-union workers of WalMart. Many have to go on public assistance because of their low-pay! Listening to Barbara's story was a sobering reminder of the why we all do the work we do.

California Democratic Party Chair John Burton will be leading us for the next four years! It was a great convention...and while we celebrated 2012...the Convention reminded us "We've only just begun....to 2014 and beyond. You can view the speeches, interviews and resolutions on the website <www.cadem.org/convention>.

I

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and neighbors by adding
your name to this list.

Your help is needed and
will be appreciated.

Democratic Newsletter

**The Champagne
Brunch
Sunday, June 9
11:00 am-2:00 pm**

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