The New Democrat

PDC Event Recap

By Max Ross

On June 24th, the PDC organized and hosted a fantastic event to teach people about the inner workings of the California Democratic Party. There are many aspects of the party, from local to state elected officials to the California Democratic Party. There are County party groups (like the Santa Clara County Democratic Party), chartered clubs (like the PDC) and unchartered clubs (like many of the new Resist groups). Each of these segments and groups is dependent on each other in order to develop and evaluate policy and popular support.

Margaret Okuzumi, who is heavily involved in many Democratic clubs and most recently co-founded Bayshore Progressive Democrats, gave a fantastic and very detailed overview of the California Democratic Party. She touched on how the party develops a platform, how that platform changes, and where your money might go when you give to different groups (DSCC, DCCC, etc.). Basically she suggested giving directly to candidates or clubs that you know (like the PDC hint hint).

Our own Emyle Thurber discussed what it means to be in the executive committee of the California Democratic party and shared a great learning lesson on fighting for your position. She and her husband Jim had an issue that they cared strongly about. The first year, they successfully got it on the agenda but it did not make the party platform due to quiet opposition. The second year they did much more research and went to the committee in charge of approving it. After making their case, their issue made the party platform! However, the next year when they did not go, the same quiet opposition pulled it back out of the platform. The moral for all of us is you can make change if you work hard,

The Persistent Threat of Nuclear Weapons

Gregory Loew, July 2017

At the height of the Cold War, there were more than 68,000 “active” nuclear weapons on earth, enough to obliterate life on the planet several times over. Adversaries realized (not always clearly) that these weapons, some of them a thousand times more powerful than the two dropped on Japan in 1945, could not be used to fight wars, but only as deterrents in a balance of terror regime called MAD, i.e. Mutually Assured Destruction.

Following the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war, three bilateral treaties were negotiated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union: the Partial Test Ban
Finding Common Ground

Next year, I’ll get married and inherit a grandmother who is a die-hard Republican. She’s a very kind lady, but she has some bigoted and incorrect views about the world. Every time I sit down to talk to her, she and I dance around subjects that would be confrontational, and instead find certain subjects that we might agree on. It’s not very hard -- we’re both glad that the stock market is doing well right now, and we’re worried about automation taking away low-wage jobs. She’s fundamentally misinformed about health care, and what repealing Obamacare would mean. But laws are complicated, misinformation is rampant, and so mistakes are routine for most people. My job as a legislative aide means that I encounter the full spectrum of political engagement and education every single day.

But every week, my future grandmother-in-law and I find a way to coexist and even enjoy each other’s company. And even more so, there is a distinct value in our face-to-face conversations. Everyone knows that we’re in a “liberal elite bubble,” particularly in our Democratic clubs in the Bay Area. When there is a divergence of opinion within the Democratic Party, they generally stem from a shared vision, and then branch off from there. But when you’re talking to someone with a completely different point of view, it’s a little more intimidating. But it’s still very worthwhile.

Reading Hillbilly Elegy is a good start -- but we shouldn’t stop there. Talking to people, having hard conversations without trying to insult each other is something we should do, and not just talk about. You can say, “But we live in the Bay Area! Everyone is liberal!” I encourage you to seek out some Republicans. They’re more common around here than you think.

Of course, having conversations with the other side has its limits. We’re not going to change how people vote with a single conversation. But kind and empathic face-to-face conversations will shift our perceptions of “the other side.” We have a concept in our head about what these idiotic Trump voters are, and they have an image of what we are. A earnest and open conversation is the first step towards changing these images.
Thoughts on the Democratic Party and their candidates:

We need a strong Democratic Agenda – and it should be broad principles with the details and means of achieving the goals left to candidates. We stand for: equality of opportunity; valuable public education; health care for everyone; for equitable tax policy; and for freedom to dissent within the party on details and particulars.

Most importantly, we need strong candidates who can articulate an agenda of their own that is consistent with the broad party agenda. The candidate must be clear on what he/she wants to accomplish while in elective office, and why people should trust her/him. The role of the party should be to seek out qualified candidates and encourage them.

We have a crisis that is far bigger than the divide between the new progressive wing and the old guard. There is no reason for either side to concede to the other, but there is good reason to remain civil and cooperative. The immediate problem in California is that the Democrats are in firm control; thus, with no external threat, they are working to chew up each other. We cannot afford that at the national level!

Thoughts on fake news:

We are awash in alternate facts, historical fiction, fake news, and bald-faced lies. This situation is not particularly unusual – except for the sources. We should all be used to the grocery store tabloids with screaming headlines to lure buyers. Those sources are obvious. Today the situation is far more serious as the misinformation comes from government officials and media sources that many people consider reliable.

A portion of the blame – certainly not most of it – can be attributed to the scientific community and the normally reliable media sources. Some examples that range from the seemingly trivial and inane to the serious:

First example:

The evening news includes a weather report, as does the morning paper. The newscast will include phrases like: “It is currently 75° in Mountain View after a high of 92°” or “rain is coming to the area which will create a wet and dangerous morning commute on the Peninsula.” But you look at the thermometer and it is currently 67° degrees outside; the high today was closer to 102°. And you know that the last six times the weather forecast said it would rain on the morning commute, it did not; sure enough, the next morning, no rain!

Almost no one expects weather forecasts to be perfect, but they are delivered in a manner that exudes confidence and certainty. When the scientists warn of climate change, again in a manner that exudes confidence and certainty, why should the casual observer take the prediction seriously when all prior experience would have one believe otherwise?

There are, of course very good reasons. “Weather” and “climate” are two different concepts. Weather forecasts are based on current conditions and models that proport to predict the short range future. Climate forecasts are based on the solid evidence of changes over past years. But these reasons are rarely, if ever, articulated in forecasts reports for either weather or climate.

Meteorologists set up the listening audience to expect little accuracy in their forecasts. There is then some surprise when a significant portion of the population fails to take long term climate changes seriously.

Second example:

The New York Times (6/20/2017, page A12) has a full page story about The 15 Best-Educated Congressional Districts. The lead sentence asserts that “Across the country there are only 15 congressional districts where at least half of adults have a college degree.” The article lists the districts with a paragraph on each describing the environment of the district.

There is no hint anywhere on the page which might lead one to understand how this remarkable bit of data was discovered and verified. The text does explain the reason for interest in the subject: there is a special election in Georgia’s 6th district that that, oddly enough, is number six on the list of districts. (For the curious: five of the fifteen districts are in California; Anna Eshoo’s 18th CD is third on the list with 57% of the adults having college degrees.)

There is no conceivable way for this assertion to be based on hard facts. It must be the result of surveys of the population sometime in the past. But no information is provided that would allow the reader to judge the accuracy of the assertion.

Yes, this is an inconsequential matter. There is no real reason for concern whether the article is correct, close, or totally off the mark. The reason for concern extends only to the veracity of the publisher. Someone prone to believe that The New York Times and other mainstream media propagate “fake news” can surely hold this up as a case in point!

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I lobbied state and federal officials and candidates. I represented students to the City of Oberlin at council meetings and collaborated with the city to operate events that brought together college students and non-college city residents. I hosted and moderated city council candidate forum for college students and staff. I served on several student government committees and helped operate the student government process. I campaigned for OH State Senator Sue Morano and intern at the offices of DC Mayor Adrian Fenty, Representative Dennis Kucinich, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

Following graduation, I spent 2011 doing a year of service for the Illinois office of the American Monetary Institute. The nonprofit advocacy organization had written and was advocating a monetary system and federal reserve reform bill that Representative Dennis Kucinich introduced into the House in 2011. There, I trained with DFA and the Wellstone Institute in campaign management. Following that year, I moved back to Palo Alto to earn a teaching credential and enroll in the Leadership Palo Alto program.

Although I joined the Peninsula Democratic Coalition board in 2016 in which I now serve as Communications Director and notetaker, my involvement in local politics started earlier. I served on the team for my mom’s 2012 Green Party campaign for US House in Anna Eshoo’s District 18. The campaign ended with her getting 4% of the vote in the June primary. That summer, I joined the Democratic Party and the PDC’s voter registration initiative. There, I met the core people who would relaunch Peninsula Young Democrats (PYD) that fall. I served briefly as president, before Cory Wolbach did outstanding work as PYD’s president in 2013! I completed my service to PYD as secretary in 2016.

It's been a heartfelt honor and pleasure to work as a member of the local California Young Democrats (CYD) chapters, PYD, SVYD, and SACYD. The energy, intelligence, creativity, and enthusiasm of my young Democrats friends and older Democrats mentors has been the most empowering and wonderful experience I’ve had in politics. Bearing witness to and collaborating with my outstanding colleagues, especially those who have taken the extremely daunting plunge into the career of elective office, has been my greatest cause for optimism and hope. If we remain organized, engaged, and true to ourselves, nothing can stop us!

It’s our time to reach out to people who are historically left out of the politics. Youth in particular lack a structured induction into the political process. A majority of youth aren’t taught by subversively effective teachers (the concept of an empowering school state standards system is an oxymoron) of politics, culture, and comparative studies. These challenges present excellent opportunities for growth for the membership and mission of Young Democrats chapters. These opportunities are especially visible to me as an educator and teacher’s union member.

There is enormous opportunity for growth of participation and empowerment in our backyard. A fraction of other marginalized groups are self-organized, but a plurality aren’t. These groups include recent immigrants, people of color, GLTBQ people and women, the (mostly non-unionized) working class, the underclass, and the non-propertyed. These groups comprise a majority of Californians. Even more privileged Californians are

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Fake News

(Continued from page 3)

Third example:
Medial records are now kept electronically for almost everyone. The medical databases, scrubbed of the information that could identify individuals, are available for use by researchers. With essentially unlimited computer capability this makes it possible to run as many correlation statistics as anyone could imagine at virtually no cost.

To create an obviously silly example, one could hypothesize that people born close to the first of a month are more likely to go blind in their right eye while those born closer to the middle of the month are more likely to go blind in their left eye. It would not take much time or effort to set up the program and process several million medical records to get correlation coefficients.

The example is nonsense; but the situation is not. If someone runs 100 such calculations with a hypothesis that is less ridiculous the odds are outstanding that some of the results will be statistically significant – purely by chance. That provides the basis for a paper asserting that, for example, drinking coffee decreases the chance of having a heart attack, or that eating dark chocolate is good for your health. [Editor’s note: bad example; eating dark chocolate is good for your health whether medically proven or not!]

The paper generated then becomes a news item reporting the health benefits, or detriments, of certain conditions or habits. No harm seems to be done – until the next time someone tests a similar hypothesis with a different data base and gets the opposite result. Then there is yet another argument for those who believe that the “experts” deserve no more attention or respect than does anyone else.

A brief statistics/research lesson for readers who got lost in the discussion above. The proper procedure for investigation is to formulate a causal hypothesis: this result should follow from that condition because of the hypothetical mechanism linking cause and effect. The hypothesis can then be tested against available data; statistical theory is then employed to determine the likelihood that the result occurred purely by chance. When the results are written up, the causal linkage should be a critical part of the report. Therefore, it becomes a farce when random ideas are processed and correlations published with no concept of cause and effect.

Fourth, and final, example:
Public opinion polling has never been easier or less reliable. Since neither the pollsters nor the media reporting the results seem overly concerned with reliability, there is a constant stream of published approval ratings, voter preferences, issues of importance, etc. Since there is never verification of the accuracy, it is a slight stretch to call these reports “fake news.” But they have the potential of doing great harm to the electoral process.

Here is another statistics/research lesson for those not clear on how and why the published results can vary so greatly from reality. The pollster reaches a sample of the population of interest – for example, voters in a Congressional District. The pollster typically starts with a list of registered voters and randomly selects the sample to be polled: if there are 500,000 voters in the district and the target is to get 1,000 responses, then 2,000 names will be listed. It is safe to assume that this part of the process is truly random and no bias has yet crept in.

Typical polls are done by telephone; so names on the list without phone numbers are discarded. Telephone numbers may come directly from the list of registered voters, or they may be available from data processing organizations that collect voter registration information and augment it from other available records.

Telephone polling introduces biases. By percentage points people without phones feel differently with respect to some candidates and some issues than do those with phones. These biases have come to be well known in the polling community over the past many years.

However, there is now a serious new wrinkle: a significant number of registered voters have cell phones; even more have caller ID allowing them to ignore calls from unknown numbers. Thus, a very large new source of error is present for all polling information.

At the same time polling has become virtually free. If you have the phone lists and the equipment, you can record a set of questions, get the responses automatically, tabulate the results, and send an article to the media. The only thing lacking is any rational measure of accuracy or bias in the results.

And the conclusion:
None of the examples is significant in itself. There is little that can be done about any of the situations. Remember to absorb information – from the newspaper or the television – with a large dose of skepticism and have some understanding of those who are convinced that it is all fake news.

Martin Gorfinkel

Brouillet

(Continued from page 4)

opting out of our electoral system- only 25% / 42% of Californians participated in the 2014 primary / general elections! 45% of CA voters are registered Democrat, 27%, GOP, and no party preference continues to grow at 23%. The wealthiest among us participate largely by “donating” money to candidates. As a class, the rich are the most stalwart defenders of the status quo. It will continue to take our best efforts to integrate all members of our communities in the political process and forge a consensus with our liberal coalition members to prioritize and pursue reforms.

Like other Peninsula Democratic Coalition members, I’ve committed my adult life to using the Democratic Party a vehicle on behalf of social justice for Californians and the people of the world. It has been the utmost pleasure to live and work alongside you, and I look forward to the many fruitful and community-growing years ahead of us!

In my spare time when I’m not working, campaigning, or monologuing from a soap box, I’m semi-predictable. You can usually find me reading nonfiction (I used to facilitate a book club), hiking, enjoying the water, hanging with friends, hang gliding or concert-going. YOLO!
Voter Registration Works to Save Our Democracy!

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED at two fabulous and fun festivals.

• Saturday, August 26 and Sunday, August 27, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
  Work a 2-hour shift at the Palo Alto Festival of the Arts. Shift #1: 10-noon; Shift #2: noon-2 p.m.; Shift #3: 2-4 p.m.; Shift #4: 4-6 p.m. Where: University Ave & Emerson on the Plaza near Pizza My Heart facing University Ave.

• Saturday, Sept. 9, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Shift #1: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; Shift #2: 1-3 p.m.; Shift #3: 3-5 p.m.; Shift #4: 5-7 p.m. and Sunday, September 10, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Work a 2-hour shift at the Mountain View Arts & Wine Festival. Shift #1: 10-noon; Shift #2: noon-2 p.m.; Shift #3: 2-4 p.m.; Shift #4: 4-6 p.m. Where: near Castro & High School Way.

Experienced registrars and brand-new registrars WELCOME.

We can train you on the spot. ASAP please contact Voter Registration Coordinator Karl Kramer to say you will help. karlpdfvotereg@gmail.com

See page 7 for more information on how you can help register voters! Join like minded people and GET OUT THE VOTE!
Save Our Democracy!
Do Voter Registration & Issue Outreach!
Memorial Day through October 2017
Sponsored by the PDC and special friends: PYD & the Dean Club

Learn what voters are thinking, enjoy spirited conversation, talk to folks about issues, collect petition signatures, build up the Democratic network, and have FUN while strengthening our democracy!

We are looking for Volunteers and Leads to staff farmers markets, Fairs and Festivals, and other events. We need folks all summer long, so check your calendars and contact Voter Registration Coordinator Karl Kramer with the dates and times you are available. All training and supplies will be provided.

Festivals:
- Chili Cook-Off July 4, Mitchell Park, Palo Alto (12-5pm)
- Los Altos Art and Wine - July 8 & 9 (10am-6pm)
- Palo Alto Clay & Glass - July 8 & 9 (10am-5pm)
- Menlo Park Summerfest - July 15 & 16 (10am-6pm)
- Palo Alto Art & Wine - Aug 26 & 27 (10am-6pm)
- Mountain View Art & Wine - Sept. 9 & 10 (10am-6pm)

Farmers’ Markets:
- Palo Alto Farmers’ Market
  Gilman Avenue (Saturdays 9am-12:30pm)
- Palo Alto Farmers’ Market
  California Ave. (Sundays, 9-1 PM)
- Mountain View Train Station Farmers’ Market
  East entrance Evelyn (Sundays 9am-1pm)
- Los Altos Farmers’ Market
  Third & State (Thursdays, 4-8pm)
- Menlo Park Farmers’ Market
  Chestnut Street (Sundays, 9am-1pm)

Other events may be added to the calendar so stay tuned!

Sign Up with Our Google Form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SM3DKc9yV6OJC3ExB7sqbvuVXHBwhhWmr1AdEshCGOc/viewform
OR contact Volunteer Coordinator Karl: karlpdcvotereg@gmail.com

Getting voters registered is the first step to supporting Democrats. Help eligible voters exercise their right to participate in our democracy by registering voters.
The Peninsula Democratic Coalition’s website is www.peninsulademocrats.com
Annual PDC Picnic
Saturday, August 19, 2017 • 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

NEW LOCATION: Cuesta Park, located directly beside the El Camino YMCA and El Camino Hospital, in Mountain View

$10 contribution at the door (children are free)

Expected guests include elected officials and candidates. The picnic features good food, brief (very brief!) speeches, and an auction of valuable and sentimental political (and non-political) goods.

The picnic is a potluck with enough food to make a meal. (Those who come early can generally fill up on desserts.) We request a $10 contribution at the door (children are free).

We welcome your donation to the PDC: if you have something to contribute to the auction, contact Cory Wolbach at PDCPicnic@gmail.com.

Special Guest speaker:
Gubernatorial Candidate Delaine Eastin

You can make your payment online by visiting: https://secure.actblue.com/donate/pdc2017picinic

Wine, beer and soft drinks will be available; those attending are asked to bring a potluck dish to share (appetizer, main dish, salad, or dessert).

Please bring your checkbook to facilitate bidding on the fabulous articles in the auction. No reservations or RSVP required.

For further information, visit www.peninsulademocrats.com.

The Peninsula Democratic Coalition (PDC) is the oldest and largest Democratic Club in Silicon Valley. The PDC has a long history of promoting Democratic candidates and ideals and is chartered by both the Santa Clara and San Mateo County Democratic Central Committees. The PDC is affiliated with the California Democratic Council, a statewide coalition of grass roots clubs. The PDC has members throughout Silicon Valley including the towns of Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Stanford, Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, San Jose, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Portola Valley, Atherton, Woodside, San Mateo, Belmont and San Carlos.
President Obama's tweet quoting Nelson Mandela after Charlottesville, Va., is the third-most liked tweet ever on Twitter with over 2 million likes. Don’t tell Donald Trump, this would really upset him.

- An elephant has trampled and killed an Argentinian hunter who was lining up a shot to kill it in a private wildlife area in Namibia. The newspaper story mentioned his “tragic death.” Tragic? More like mean bitch karma for another win.

- Rick Barry today said the scrutiny President Trump is facing is “a disgrace to the world, to our country, what they’re doing.” Hmm, so for that NBA Champions visit to the White House, maybe Barry can just show up representing the team for lunch?

- Name of guy who killed a woman & injured many others w/ his car trending on Twitter. How about we don’t use it? Just hers. #HeatherHeyer

- Trump comments today on Charlottesville: Too late, and too little. Like his hands.

- So now we have it, get killed by an undocumented immigrant have the President pay multiple tributes and get a law named after you. Get deliberately run over by a White Supremacist, get a quick mention in a Presidential speech two days after the fact.

- Trump - 54 minutes to attack Merck CEO for quitting his council, 2 days to condemn White Supremacists.

- So did they get Trump to read anti-racism statement by promising him 2 scoops of ice cream & that he could pardon Joe Arpaio?

- Just what would Trump have to do to have some of his base disavow him? Praise Hillary or Obama?

- Amazing how much quicker Donald Trump was today to denounce “Fake News” media compared to how long it took him to denounce neo-Nazis.

- Open note to White Supremacists wanting publicity for yourselves and your cause. Why risk marching? Just post your names & pictures, the internet will take care of it.

- James Allsup, one of the leaders of the Charlottesville neo-Nazi White Supremacist rally, is a recent Washington State graduate who was head of the college Republicans.

- Stanford is playing WSU November 4 in Pullman. Sure hope they’re bringing the band.

- When next American is killed by a Muslim or immigrant will Trump again decry “hated, bigotry & violence” on many sides?

- Guess no one told all those neo-Nazi White Supremacists that all those tiki torches were made in China.

- Rumors that those against McMaster in the Trump White House are trying to allege he has a drinking problem. Except that maybe a “drinking problem” is the only way a sane person could work in the Trump White House.

- Pence – “Trump clearly & unambiguously condemned bigotry, violence & hate in streets of Charlottesville.” Uh oh, Time to check the VP for concussions?

- Mom of alleged Charlottesville car killer says he dropped his cat off w/ her to attend rally. Cats everywhere responding “not my human.”

- “If you’re not outraged, you’re not paying attention,” Heather Heyer’s last FB post.

- Amazing to have a pro-Confederate pro-Nazi rally in Virginia supported by so many who also say “Hillary lost, get over it.”

- SF Giants fans have by and large re-embraced the prodigal Panda. Pablo Sandoval has apologized. Anyone who thinks they made a mistake by voting Trump, welcome back too.

- The Warriors’ Kevin Durant just apologized for calling India “20 years behind.” Hope someone doesn’t have a need soon to call tech support.

- I’m a travel agent. I say “best regards” when booking a hotel reservation, not talking about people injured by a terrorist.

- Just think, if Colin Kaepernick had only beaten up his girlfriend he’d be playing for an NFL team by midseason.

- Guam is taking advantage of the North Korea publicity to promote themselves as a holiday destination. All sorts of potential slogans – “Your vacation will be a real blast?”

- Starting to seem like most of US foreign policy has now become “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.”

- AP reports USA “quietly engaged in back channel diplomacy with North Korea for several months.” As in parents saying “Just ignore children?”

- Ivanka Trump reportedly opening store in Trump Tower this fall. So how many millions will US taxpayers pay for Secret Service to protect it?

- While they’re doing all those White House renovations, can I suggest changing the locks?

- Now Trump is after Senator McConnell. It’s amazing how buses run in DC with so many people having been thrown under them.

- NY Times says “Trump’s threat to North Korea was improvised.” Yep, that great new game show – “Whose Lie is it Anyway?”

- Wonder if Trump [would] have phrased things differently to North Korea if Guam had electoral votes?

- Trump anti-regulation campaign means US won’t now screen truck drivers & train engineers for sleep apnea. What could possibly go wrong?

- Maybe best hope for our country now is to convince Trump that Obama absolutely really wanted to start a war with North Korea.

- Trump’s plan for opioid crisis.. Tell people that drugs are “no good, really bad for you in every way.” Didn’t work when Hillary told USA that about him.
Treaty (PTBT) in 1963 banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, oceans and space (but not underground), the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) in 1969, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 1972, and SALT II in 1979.

The INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces), which was signed by President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev in 1987, eliminated all nuclear and conventional missiles with ranges of 500–1,000 kilometers (short-range) and 1,000–5,500 km (intermediate-range).

By the late-1980s, the U.S. and Russia negotiated and concluded the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) and the 1993 START II. The 2010 New START Treaty took each nation’s strategic deployed arsenal down to 1,550 warheads by 2018. That total is still 1/3 larger than the Pentagon has determined is necessary for U.S. nuclear deterrence needs. New START will expire in 2021, unless extended by mutual agreement.

In addition to these bilateral treaties, two other multilateral treaties were negotiated:

The 1968 NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) that bars non-nuclear weapon states from acquiring and enjoining nuclear-armed states to end the arms race and achieve nuclear disarmament, to date signed by 191 nations, except for India, Pakistan, and Israel. North Korea is in breach of its NPT commitments.

The 1996 CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) that prohibits all nuclear test explosions, thereby creating a barrier against new nuclear warhead development. To date, 166 nations have ratified and 183 states have signed it. The U.S. and seven other states must still ratify the CTBT for it to enter into force.

Today, the world’s nuclear-armed states still possess a total about 15,000 nuclear warheads. (See graph below.)

Despite all these treaties, the risk of nuclear weapons getting used some day has not gone away.

1. Conflicts like the Cuban Missile Crisis can re occur, and rational or irrational leaders can still start a nuclear war by miscalculation, as for example in Korea.
2. Serious nuclear accidents and mistaken launch orders have occurred in the past and will probably happen again.
3. Of the nine nuclear-weapon states, only two—China and India—have adopted a “no first use” policy.
4. A significant number of the nuclear weapons deployed by the U.S. and Russia are still on a “launch-under-attack” posture, meaning that the leaders of either country could order the launch of hundreds of nuclear warheads on ICBMs within a minimum of four minutes and on SLBMs within fifteen minutes. “De-alerting,” i.e. mutually agreeing to lengthen the above “short fuses” has been advocated for years but the U.S. and Russia have never agreed to this for fear that they would weaken their respective deterrence postures.
5. The use of just a portion of the U.S. and Russian arsenals, or an exchange between India and Pakistan would produce catastrophic immediate consequence for hundreds of millions of people, with global climactic and fallout effects potentially affecting billions.
6. If terrorists get hold of a sufficient quantity of unsecured highly enriched uranium or plutonium, they could build crude nuclear bombs and create havoc.

On July 7th, 2017, after several months of deliberations, a special conference sponsored by the U.N. formally adopted a treaty that categorically prohibits the use of nuclear weapons and ultimately strives for their total elimination. Similar treaties had already been adopted in the past for chemical and biological weapons, land mines and cluster bombs. One hundred twenty two countries approved the treaty but, unfortunately, forty countries refused to support it for now. The latter include the U.S. and the eight other nuclear weapons states, and most other European countries, Canada, Japan and Australia, all considering themselves protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Much hard work lies ahead to eventually bring them on board.

What you can do

A. Stay informed and make your legislators aware of the above listed risks.

B. Sign up for information from the Council for a Livable World and/or the Arms Control Association and make a donation to support their work (Donations to the Arms Control Association are partially tax deductible).

*Note: The total number of stockpiled weapons in the chart above includes deployed weapons.*
The Commedia dell’arte comes to the White House!

By Claude Ezran

Commedia dell’arte, an early version of theater that originated in Italy in the 16th century, is a major part of Western Civilization’s cultural heritage. Over the past centuries it has had a major and durable influence on many art forms such as painting, theater and opera. At present, we do not hear as much about Commedia dell’arte as in the past, but the Trump White House, with our cultural erudition in mind, has taken upon itself to revive this almost forgotten form of art and push it to new heights!

In order to help you better follow the ongoing performance at the White House, a little bit of a refresher course is in order. Some of the main characters of Commedia dell’arte are (this is taken straight out of Wikipedia – Italics are mine, for clarification):

Scaramuccia

“(Literally “little skirmisher”), also known as Scaramouche, is a stock clown character. The role combined characteristics of the zanni (servant) and the Capitano (masked henchman). Usually attired in black Spanish dress and burlesquing a don (noble person), he was often beaten by Harlequin for his boasting and cowardice...Scaramouche entertains the audience by his grimaces and affected language (can be very affected indeed!).”

Il Capitano

“(“The Captain”). He most-likely was never a “Captain”, but rather appropriated the name for himself...He is often a braggart and a swaggerer...Il Capitano often talks at length about made up conquests of both the militaristic and carnal nature in attempts to impress others, but often only ends up impressing himself. He gets easily carried away in his tales and doesn’t realize when those around him don’t buy his act.

He would be the first to run away from any and all battles and he has trouble enough talking to and being around men. He is also extremely opportunistic and greedy. If he is hired to fight the Turks (a.k.a. Muslims), he will bluster about fighting them to his last drop of blood, but when the Turks (or the Saudis) seem to be winning, he will join them.

Il Capitano usually has a properly showy name for himself, preferably several lines long and followed by many made-up titles and lists of relations such as Fanfaroni (“Trumpeter” or “Loudmouth”), Tagliacantoni (“Small-Sized...hey, the hands of course!)... He is also prone to awarding himself ridiculous titles like Sieur de Fracasse et Brise-tout (French: “Lord of ‘Knock it down’ and ‘Break everything’”).”

Innamorati

“(“The Lovers”). These characters were present within Commedia plays for the sole purpose of being in love with one another, and moreover with themselves. Despite facing many obstacles, the Lovers are always united by the end...The comedy of the Lovers is that they are ridiculous, and over the top about everything, but they are completely sincere in their emotions...The Lovers often act in a childlike and immature way. When not getting their way, they become completely devastated, they pout, and even cry and whine if things do not go according to their wishes. Very selfish and self-centered, the Lovers are in their own worlds in which they themselves are the most important subjects.

The Lovers are always young in age, possessing courteousness and gallantry. They are very educated, but lack life experiences that would have prepared them for the real world. They are very attractive, and elegant in their appearance overall. The women’s dresses were of the finest silks (preferably from the Ivanka collection) and they wear showy jewelry (same)...The costumes of the lovers were the fashion of the day...Their speech is very eloquent, as they are of high social status...Their language is full of flamboyant and lofty rhetoric so that most of what they say is not taken too seriously, by either the audience or the other characters...Overall, they lack contact with the ground and seem to float across the ground rather than take steps...The Lovers are aware of the audience’s presence. They use the audience as a means to show themselves off.”

Sandrone

“Sandrone, is represented as a peasant who is crude, clever, and cunning. He is seen as the spokesman of a humble people who are ill-treated, eternally hungry, and always using tricks to make ends meet...Sandrone sports a corduroy jacket, short corduroy pants, red and white cross-striped socks, a floral embroidered vest, and sturdy farmer’s boots. He also wears a wig with long hair.”

Brighella

“He is loosely categorized as one of the zanni or servant characters though he often was portrayed as a member of the middle class...His character could be adapted to whatever the needs to the scenario might be, just as Brighella himself is adaptable to any circumstance...He is often most cruel to those beneath him on the social ladder.

Brighella is a masterful liar, and can make up a spur-of-the-moment lie for any situation. He is an inveterate schemer, and he is good at what he does. If his plans failed, it was almost always out of luck on behalf of the other characters. When he’s a servant, he will either serve his master devotedly or look for every opportunity to ruin and take advantage of him as he happens to see fit—whatever will gain the greatest advantage for himself and himself alone...He has few good qualities save for his ability to entertain the audience...His name comes from an Italian word which can mean “bother” or “contention” in Italian...Brighella in English would be therefore something like “Fghty” or “Brawly”,”

As noted Palo Alto Network News (PANN) art critic Claudio Narze put it: “the White House cast has mastered the intricacies of Commedia dell’arte characters so well that, at times, one could almost believe that this all for real.”

Cast in order of appearance: Anthony Scaramucci, The Donald, Jared Kushner & Ivanka Trump, Steve Bannon and Sean Spicer. Performances are daily until November 2020, with the possibility of an extension. Any resemblance to actual persons, living, dead, or fired, is not purely coincidental. Enjoy the show!

**Claude Ezran is a long-time PDC member and can be reached at ezran@yahoo.com**
CALENDAR
OF EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETINGS
Santa Clara County Democratic Central Committee
meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at 70 West Hedding, San Jose. Call 408/445-9500 for information. All are welcome to attend.

San Mateo County Democratic Central Committee
meets for their General Meeting on the third Thursday of every month at 7:30pm at the Transport Workers Union, Local 505 building located at 1521 Rollins Road in Burlingame.

The PDC Board of Directors 
meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Palo Alto Unitarian Church, 505 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto, Fireside Room; all are welcome.

EVENTS: AUGUST 2017
Wednesday, August 16, 9-10 a.m.
Java with Jerry. Join State Senator Jerry Hill, SD-13, for coffee and conversation.
Where: Clocktower Coffee Roasting Company, 2015 E. Middlefield Road, Mountain View, 94043. Bring your ideas, questions and concerns about legislative issues affecting the community. No RSVP or appointment necessary. Coffee provided at no taxpayer expense. Jerry looks forward to seeing you soon.

Friday, August 18, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Silicon Valley Action Conference.
Where: Computer History Museum, 1401 North Shoreline Boulevard, Mountain View 94043. Learn how to get involved in shifting the course of future electoral outcomes in support of our values and policies at both federal and state level harnessing Silicon Valley’s brainpower and creativity. Attendees will leave the conference with a clear list of priorities and action items that you personally can take to engage and make a difference. We hope you will join our team and attend this important event. Cost: $0-$300. Conference Hosts: Bruce Fram & Dilawar Syed Download the Agenda HERE

Saturday, August 19, 4-7 p.m.
PDC/PYD ANNUAL PICNIC/POT LUCK Fund Raiser and Fun Day at Cuesta Park Group Picnic Area.
Note new location. $10 donation to help defray venue, incidental expenses. Kids 12 and under, free. Sponsors: Free. Bring family and friends and a picnic food item serving 8 to share—summer salads, baked beans, appetizers, desserts. Beverages, barbequed hot dogs and condiments provided. Bring your checkbook and bid on cool Silent Auction items not to be missed: political memorabilia including “Women’s March” T-shirts and hand-knit, pink pussy hats; restaurant gift certificates; sports, theatre tickets; creative and fun outings. Questions? Contact Picnic Co-Chairs Leora Tanjuatco, leora.tanjuatco@gmail.com and Cory Wolbach, pdcpicnic@gmail.com
Saturday, August 19, 1-4 p.m.
Community Services Agency (CSA) 60th Birthday Party

EVENTS: SEPTEMBER 2017
Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, District 5:
Listening to Trump’s America. TWO dates at TWO different locations:
Join Joe as he shares what he learned interviewing people across the Rust Belt.

Saturday, September 9, 2-4 p.m.
Where: Mountain View Senior Center, 266 Escuela Avenue, Mountain View. Sponsored by the five Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County: Cupertino/Sunnyvale, Los Altos - Mountain View, Palo Alto, Southwest Santa Clara Valley, San Jose/Santa Clara. Time for Q&A. FREE and OPEN to ALL.

Saturday, September 16, 12:30 p.m. Doors Open; 1p.m.
If you missed Joe on Sept. 9, here is another chance.

Among other services, CSA provides emergency food, clothing, housing for local families in need. Where: CSA. 204 Stierlin Road, Mountain View. Enjoy music, food, agency tours, children’s activities and more. FREE, but please RSVP at www.csacares.org/events.

Sunday, August 20, 12-4 p.m.
GreenTown Los Altos presents It’s Electric!
Where: DownTown Green. GreenTown Los Altos will have electric cars, electric bikes, solar panel installers, the solar cooker with freshly baked cookies, and lots of people to tell you about Silicon Valley Clean Energy, give you ideas that will save you energy and money, and tell you about a new GreenTown program to help you fight climate change.

Tuesday, August 29, Check-in: 5 p.m.; Program: 6 p.m.
Commonwealth Club Presents Senator Dianne Feinstein in conversation about her career, California’s role on the national stage and current domestic and international challenges.
Where: Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. (Attendees subject to search.) This event will sell out fast. To purchase tickets: https://www.cityboxoffice.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=2368

Wednesday, August 30, 7-8:30 p.m.
Zero Waste Home.

Wednesday, August 30, 7:30-9 p.m.
Political Geography and Minority Rule.
Where: Eagle Theater, Los Altos High School, 201 Almond Ave., Los Altos, 94022. Speaker: Stanford University Professor Jonathan Rodden. Learn about important cases headed to the Supreme Court that may shape our elections for generations. Sponsored by the National Voter Corps, the Mid-peninsula ACLU and the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto. FREE and OPEN to ALL.

Additional calendar listings are available on the PDC website as they become available.
but making it stick requires even more hard work and commitment.

Lastly, Amy Pearl discussed how chartered clubs like the PDC work. In the California Democratic Party, all chartered clubs can send roughly one delegate to the state convention for every 20 club members living in an assembly district. In this way, we as a club can directly influence the party platform. On top of that, if one of you reading this wants to be a delegate to the state convention, it is possible. Chartered clubs are the best way for a normal citizen to impact the state party.

The biggest thing I took away from the event is that the whole Democratic Party is just people. There isn’t a conspiracy, and the system is set up to avoid a conspiracy. There are so many routes to influence the party, from being elected to office, to being a delegate, to forming a club, that no one person or small group can control it all. It’s just people working hard fighting for what they believe in. If you want something to happen, you should figure out how to make it happen. Since the election, I have heard lots of people say “someone should...” (get more young people involved, say). People like Margaret, Emy, and Amy, and other PDC board members like Zack Ross, Nicole Fernandez, and Michael Vargas work really hard. The PDC and the state party are a structure to hopefully make the task easier, but if you want something done, I urge you to go do it!