



LOCAL NEWS...

Stop Blackwater Rally

-- Rep. Bob Filner Speaks
by Raymond Lutz

Our "Stop Blackwater" Encampment, rally, and march to the gates of the proposed Blackwater West facility was a rousing success, despite a variety of roadblocks that were coincidentally timed with the event. Fortunately, the news of Blackwater's September 16th shooting in Iraq, killing 17 people, hit just a few weeks prior to event, and the testimony of Erik Prince, the founder and CEO of Blackwater, occurred before Henry Waxman's oversight committee just days earlier. In that respect,

we could not have asked for better news cycle helping to promote visibility of our event.

Carol Jahnkow of the San Diego Peace Resource Center was the primary organizer. She has run quite a number of similar events in the past, and did a great job of building a coalition of sponsors and supporters, planning it carefully, and then executing the plan with only a very few inconsequential glitches. Activist San Diego, Veterans for Peace, and the Sierra Club took an active role in making the event successful, in addition to a number of Potrero residents who contributed as well. I helped with the promotion of the event in the media with the help of Karen Pomer, the publicist for Jeremy Scabill.

The event itself started on Saturday at 9am with a walk to the Hauser Wilderness, which is just to the north of the

valley, led by Geoffrey Smith a Sierra Club leader. Tom Lamb went on the hike and said it was quite enjoyable.

At 2pm, we started our seminar series, and I gave a presentation on Blackwater and the Blackwater West project to a full-capacity crowd in the Pavillion Building of Potrero County Park. After that session, we had a very short presentation by Psephos concerning the vote-counting situation in the recall election of the Potrero Planning Group, followed by two breakout sessions, one on the impacts of wildlife in the area by Rene Owens and the other on Militarization of the Border by Enrique Morones of Border Angels.

During that day, I was called frequently by Tom Reopelle of KNX radio in LA, and we had Fox-6 News, the local Fox affiliate on site. The Fox-6 News crew did an extensive interview that afternoon.

That evening, we went over to the "Rally Site" on the property of Randall Parks, only about a half mile from the Blackwater West project site. Here the group gathered for music and poetry. If you don't already know, Steve Kowitz, a Potrero resident who teaches English at

East County Democratic Club

Serving El Cajon, Rancho San Diego, Jamul, Lakeside, and outlying San Diego County since 1965

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MEETING LOCATION:

*Rancho San Diego Library
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(Unless otherwise noted!)*

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
IN PROGRESS!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

JOHN DEAN

Converted Republican John Dean of Watergate fame will be speaking at the La Mesa Community Center on November 7th, 6:30pm. Seating will be limited to the first 350 people, and book signing before and after his talk. Books available on site! Note: \$10 donation requested, \$5 Club members. Free if you purchase a book!

AMERICAN BLACKOUT

Current Events Theater will screen the film *American Blackout* on Sunday, October 21st at 2pm. Please help set up at 1pm and gather for refreshments at 1:30. This film recounts voter disenfranchisement at the 2004 elections, primarily against black voters. Election integrity group Psephos will moderate the discussion after the film.

HOLIDAY PARTY

Marti Emerald, candidate for San Diego City Council and former TV personality will keynote at our Holiday Party on December 5th. We join with the other clubs in the area for a huge get-together! Potluck. Held at the La Mesa Community Center from 6:30 to 9pm. Mark your calendars!



See Local News on page 2.

SCHEDULE

07 Nov 2007 (Wed) 6:30-9 pm

John Dean

Lecture and book signing.
La Mesa Community Center

11 Nov 2007 (Sun)

Current Events Theater presents *American Blackout*, recounting the voter disenfranchisement in the 2004 presidential election. Election integrity group Psephos will moderate the discussion after the film. RSD Library

05 Dec 2007 (Wed) 6:30-9 pm

Holiday Party!

Keynote: Marti Emerald

This is a combined meeting with La Mesa-Foothills, Santee, and East County Democratic Clubs.
La Mesa Community Center



LOCAL NEWS (Cont.)

Southwestern College is quite an accomplished poet, and read two of his masterpieces that evening. Several bands and performers played, some really quite good.

Later, many of the activists returned to Potrero County Park to camp for the night. Getting together in such a social atmosphere helped those in attendance to get to know each other and have deeper discussions that are usually not possible during the fervor of the rally and march. Indeed, we had four photojournalism students who came down from the Brooks Institute in Ventura to document the event. Take a note for the future as this is a great way to get free photojournalists who have great cameras to document any event in the future.

Sunday Morning, Dave Wiley and Jim Brown, both of Veterans for Peace held a well-attended session on war profiteering. That was good news as they moved their session from the slot opposite my Blackwater presentation.

Sunday was the big day. About 250 people gathered at the Rally Site and the rally itself started at 1pm. Our keynote speaker, Rep. Bob Filner spoke about being "Blackmailed" in a bad game of "Blackjack" by "Blackwater." He has proposed legislation that will make mercenary training on private property illegal. (However, his legislation does not go far enough and even seems to make mercenary training on government property sound just fine.) Also, speaking was Rick Jacobs of the Courage Campaign and Executive Producer of Iraq for Sale. We



200+ people marched to the gates of Blackwater West.
Photo courtesy Beachblogger

attempted to arrange for Jeremy Scahill to come to the event but he was simply not able to get away from the peak of attention in DC, as you can imagine.

An incredible gaggle of media was present, from CNN to NPR to City Beat.

After the rally, the truck used for the stage headed up the march, about a half mile to the project site. I counted almost exactly 200 people taking part in the walk. About 2/3 of the way to the gate, two white jeeps driven by Blackwater employees passed the group, with one of them pointing his hand like a gun "shooting" at the protesters, and documented in a number of photos took by the crowd. I've been told that such a gesture amounts to assault--a threat--especially when you consider the trigger-happy mentality of Blackwater mercenaries. Indeed, if nothing else, it points out that these guys have a very limited repertoire of interactions with the world, with shooting being the singular behavior to apparently everything.

The 200-person platoon of protestors continued to march down the road, a majority wearing bright-green T-shirts emblazoned with Stop Blackwater, chanting "Stop Black Water." About 100 yards from the intended destination of the main gate to the property, a white Hummer sat to the side, and Brian Bonfiglio, VP Blackwater, stood next to a chain stretched across the road. Signs were displayed stating that no one would be allowed on the property.

The crowd bunched up at the unexpected chain and I worked my way to the front, putting my face in Bonfiglio's, demanding that they let us walk to the gate where we could see into the property. "Stop Black Water," the group continued to chant. I can say that under the calm exterior of Bonfiglio, the power of 200 protesters in his face was quite unnerving, to be sure. As expected, Blackwater did not give in and become a cooperative and friendly neighbor, with apple pies and treats for the group. No, the best we got from this group was a hand formed into a gun and

repeatedly pointed and "shot" at the group. Not the kind of neighbor I'd want either.

Well, despite Bonfiglio's pathetic resistance with the chain across the road, the protesters simply turned around and walked up a road to a power pole, providing a convenient overlook to the valley. The group took pictures and left a sign on the power pole as a reminder of the event.

On our return trip, we noted the 15 or so Pro-Blackwater protesters across the street from the Rally Site with a lackluster reaction to our grassroots rally. Instead of hand-painted signs stating "Stop Blackwater," "Blackwater Go Home," "Stop War Profiteers," and the like, they had professionally made banners saying "Wait for the conclusions of the EIR" or "We support law enforcement and military training." Our rally organizers were smart to put out about ten American flags flying by the road so no one could make the claim that we are anti-American. Good Job.

At the rally, I met Ken King a self-described "Conservative Republican" who is running for Duncan Hunter's seat. I called him after the rally and asked him why he was there. He said he supported our efforts from a property-rights standpoint, and supported the efforts of the Potrero residents to keep the outsider from setting up shop, a facility very inconsistent with the plan for the area. He said he knows Dianne Jacob pretty well and thinks that the project will never be approved. I'm not so sure, but I think we have a very good shot, especially if we can bring such people into our resistance effort.

On December 11, a recall election will be held for the Potrero Planning Group members who voted to support the project. In essence, this has become a referendum on the project. If the local voters decide against the project, then we will make it clear that it will be appropriate for Blackwater to pull out, and spare the community further agony fighting them. From their attitude at the gate, I doubt they will, but I'm willing to be surprised.



Candidate Recruitfest

by Raymond Lutz

Our October 21st meeting was entitled the "Candidate Recruitfest" a new approach to finding viable candidates for the upcoming election year. If you've every even thought of providing your services to your community, there is probably a seat for you.

It turns out that in this are, many of the seats never even appear on the ballot, since they appoint a new replacement prior the election, and no one runs against the (typically) Republican crony incumbent.

Seats range from city commission positions, which are appointed by the mayor (and therefore hard to get for our progressive comrades) but if we get three or more to apply and no one else does, the City Council will have to appoint someone from that group.

Other seats, such as Community Planning Groups, School Boards, Water Boards, and Hospital Districts are elected but are not well compensated, if at all. City Councils, County Board of Supervisors, County Board of Education and other seats are sometimes very well compensated.

We have several fine candidates running in the 52nd congressional district, including newcomers Michael Lumpkin and Jim Hester.

Dianne Jacob will have to run a campaign this year, with two candidates

already throwing their hat in the ring. At the last election, no one ran against her.

This process is not over, by a long shot. We still need a candidate for the 77th Assembly District, and there are many other seats that are up for grabs at the lower levels, some that are completely vacant.

Have a desire to get involved? Contact me for more information.

Zeitgeist raises a fuss

In the October edition of this publication, we had a description of the film "Zeitgeist" which was shown in September. We said that the film "considered the story of Christ and other mythical figures with respect to astronomical facts."

For some people, this statement went a bit too far, and we can see how it could be misread to couple mythical figures to Christ.

I can say that at least for myself, there is no doubt of the historical truth of the person of Jesus who walked the earth at the start of the current age, the age of Pisces. Indeed, the symbol of the fish which is associated with Christianity comes from the zodiac symbol for this constellation.

On the other hand, the story associated with the birth and death sequence of Christ is impossible to substantiate using any contemporaneous documentation of the time, and is the part of Christianity which is the most coercive, and indeed troublesome.

Even Thomas Jefferson admitted this when he said "the greatest enemies to the doctrines of Jesus are those, calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted the for the system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in his genuine words. And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of a generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter."

We have several copies of the film Zeitgeist still available for sale, and anyone who is curious, I suggest that you watch the film.

Have a differing opinion?

Just send your comments to

newsletter@eccdweb.org



From the President...



As this edition of the East County Progressive is being completed, the county is still in shock from the worst wildfire season in history.

The unfortunate residents of Potrero have been hit by a double whammy. Not only do they have to defend themselves against the intrusion of an unwanted mercenary training camp—oh, that's right, it's called an "Academy" now—but they also have to recover from the loss of their homes or a life.

Jan Hedlun and Carl Meyers, two opponents to Blackwater, did not lose their homes, but they are currently cut off from the world, with no way to replenish their supplies of fuel. Without fuel, they have no water, as their well pumps won't work.

Pro-Blackwater Planning Group members Jerry and Mary Johnson lost their home and Thell Fowler was seen helping to save a number of the homes in the area.

Although we may be on opposite sides of the Blackwater issues, these people are in the midst of a dire situation and deserve our help and understanding. This is not the time for political rallies, news conferences, or any other such action. This is the time to reach out and help anyone in the community that we can.

At this time, we can still work to progress our agenda through letters and suggesting that others do the same. We will probably implement a campaign to raise funds for the Harris Ranch Fire victims, although the details of such a fund and the methodology for distributing the funds fairly is something that is still being reviewed.

As we begin to recover from these devastating fires, I hope they do a thorough investigation into the start of the fires. With all the other "funny" things happening and the fact that an ex-Blackwater guy admitted that I had been "targeted" by Blackwater, I wonder if there is a connection here as well.

-- Raymond Lutz, President. ♪

Membership Campaign

Our club makes it easy to know when your membership expires: everyone expires at the end of the year unless you joined after October.

Now is the time to send in your dues for the next year! You will get a subscription to this newsletter, the right to vote at club meetings, and discounts on events, plus, the knowledge that you are supporting the most important resistance to our Republican neocon administration and local cronyism.

Also, our nominating committee will be looking for people who want to take leading roles in the club. Remember, candidates cannot have club roles. PLEASE VOLUNTEER!



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ECDC MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Don't miss any future issues!)

	Single	Dual/Couple
Student/Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15
General	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Sustaining	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Sponsoring	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200
Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$750
Newsletter Only	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12 (free otherwise).	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a Democrat		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am not a Democrat but wish to join as a non-voting Associate		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please send newsletter as email (PDF).		
<input type="checkbox"/> My name and address as shown on the label is incorrect, see corrections --->		
Occupation: _____		
<i>(Req'd for FPPC Reports)</i>		

COPs NEWS

COPs "Arrest" Bob McClellan

by Raymond Lutz

El Cajon City Councilmember Bob McClellan started a new practice last month, "Constitutional Moments" based on a request by Mayor Mark Lewis. Incorporated as part of the official agenda of city business, it was simply an excuse for McClellan to promote his religious beliefs, including the concept that our founding fathers intended for this to be a Christian nation, and that the notion of Church and State separation is a myth. This is a similar tactic used when McClellan had videos produced by David Barton (Ex vice chair of the Republican Party of Texas and Tom Delay associate) to promote partisan-Republican and Church/State commingling played on the Government Access channel (Cox-24) for four years. Indeed, this was the reason we started COPs, so we could nip this sort of activity in the bud.

COPs sent in a formal request to the City that this practice be stopped. However, we support the notion that McClellan can speak during the Public Comment portion of the meeting, as long as he makes his comments from the public microphone and not from his seat as councilmember. The City Attorney sent the council a private letter stating that the practice must stop or they would face a lawsuit (which I threatened in my letter.) At the Oct. 9th meeting, the item was no longer on the agenda, but McClellan proceeded to make his "public comment" from the dais. It looks like another letter is in order.

We appreciate the several people who came to the city council meeting to speak against this behavior, especially since the City Council has more important things to do as they are \$3.8 million in the red and have a possible police strike staring them in the face. Indeed, the actions of McClellan are not much more than a media-diversion tactic, and it worked. The UT presented his picture

several times, but has only light coverage of the red ink.

Kudos to the City Attorney, Morgan Foley, for doing the right thing and standing up to this extreme behavior by the City Council. Indeed, this is a way for the evang-unethical in the area to promote the concept that God is being kicked out of government, pandering to those who want more integration of Christian dogma. Our best bet is probably to ignore the whole thing once we put a stop to it. I can only wonder if this means that McClellan will run again or not.

All I can say is that the COPs are having their intended effect. The City Council would have no one there to limit their excesses if we weren't there.

Find a governmental body to oversee. this is a very powerful way to get our country back, to draw the line in the sand of propriety.

Please contact Raymond at 619-820-5321 to help you find a place!

