



The Tri-Valley Democrat

Tri-Valley Democratic Club

April, 2007

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Meeting Place: IBEW Hall, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin

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April Meeting Agenda

IBEW Hall

Monday, April 16, 2007

7:00 meet and greet Announcements

7:30 Speaker:

Dr. Elbert Branscomb, LLNL,

**Past Director DOE Joint Genome
Institute, speaking on *Post Genome***

Biology's Societal Effects

Q&A - discussion

Adjourn

Cuff links By Acuff

Don't we each have a stake in our own genome?

What can be included in a definition of "intellectual property"? What deserves rightful protection with a copyright or a patent and what is garden variety greed?

I read that the US Patent and Trademark Office has taken steps to review three patents on human embryonic stem cells. These are patents held by the University of Wisconsin on the work done by one of their faculty members, (not by the faculty member, himself).

That reminds me of Craig Venter who wanted to patent all the genes his company sequenced. Sure, it takes work and patience to tease out the cells in

a chromosome that constitute the gene and even more work to figure out what it does.

Seems to me the payoff comes from building on the knowledge you gain. If you do the basic research, you are already ahead of the pack and don't need to sequester the common property from which it came.

Neither Venter nor the national laboratories in Livermore, Los Alamos or Berkeley invented the gene or any of its protein instructions. It was the national labs, however, that laid the groundwork and invented the mechanical aids for sequencing the genome. (*Our speaker was one of the directors of that effort and incidentally is one of the most exciting speakers I have ever heard.*)

Thus it was public money that made possible genetic sequencing as, in fact, it is largely public money that funds most universities. Some people forget that when scent of big bucks is on the breeze.

Another outrageous example of corporate greed came out on a

PBS news report recently. Some drug companies are trying to patent folk remedies in India, Africa and South America and the plants or animals that contribute to them.

An Indian physicist has sued one company involved and has won. She is on an international campaign to raise the public's awareness to what is happening.

We have a huge stake in this fight. If a company or a university can hold basic pieces of any genome, animal or plant, for ransom, we suffer.

Notes on The Monarchy

"When the President does it, it means that it is not illegal."

Richard Nixon, then, no longer president, stating the foundation of the Cheney/Bush assertion of "presidential prerogative". Given further definition by then **Rep. Richard Cheney** in the minority report of the Iran-Contra committee that argued for "monarchical notions of prerogative that will permit (presidents) to exceed the law".

Excerpted from *An Imbalance of Power* by Frederick A.O. Schwarz, Jr. and Aziz Huq, NYU Brennan Center for Justice, **Mercury News**, April 8, 2007

Labor Council honors Victor Uno, Josie Camacho

Victor Uno and IBEW 595 have a great impact in our area. They allow TVDC to meet free of charge at the union hall, they allow Paulette Kenyon to show progressive movies on Saturday Nights once a month, and the Unions greatest contribution was making low cost office space available to the McNerney campaign early on which allowed us to organize early. You know where that got us. Victor and Greg Bonato put together phone banking efforts and mailings that help during elections. TVDC is honored to have friends like these we salute Victor, Greg and IBEW 595. As do many others.



The Alameda County Central Labor Council, representing over 150 unions and over 100,000 union households in Alameda County honored Josie Camacho and Victor Uno, IBEW 595 Business Manager as their first Wife and Husband Trade Unionist(s) of the Year Award on Friday, March 30, at

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Oakland's Marriott Hotel. John Garamendi the states highest ranking elected Democrat joined in congratulating the couple.

Josie is being recognized for her outstanding organizing work. Over the last 15 years, Josie headed up organizing drives that took her up and down California, across the country to New York, Ohio, and Nevada. Her efforts brought thousands of workers into the Union, as she organized nurses, home care, county and public sector workers into the SEIU.

She has an incredible devotion and energy to fight for working people, and is an inspiration to all who know of her work. Josie was recently asked by Oakland's Mayor Ron Dellums to serve as his **Director of Constituent Services**. She is the only person from Labor to join his administration, and she is already helping to make important changes for Oakland.

The photo from the IBEW Local 595 picket, 6 AM on a recent Saturday, to protest a non-union electrical contractor on a downtown Oakland project. (it is very unusual that someone from the Mayor's office will join a Labor picket!) Victor & Josie have often marched and picketed together over the 30+ years that they have been married, and often make their sons join the efforts.

Watch for this

Sen. Don Perata has introduced a bill to put the California legislature on record as demanding the US bring troops home from Iraq. There is great speculation as to why he did this unless it is to put the Governor on record as opposing such an action. The action could get interesting.

Given the continuing dire predictions on the effects of global warming, the California water issues will take a primary place on the legislative agenda.

Quick Calendar:

April film at the IBEW is *The Take*, Sat. April. 28. A story of how Argentine workers reclaiming their factories.

Check the TVDC website for the latest group meetings.

www.trivalleydems.com

Membership Form

- \$30 household memberships
- \$20 individual membership
- \$10 student/ senior

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