

A Fifty-eight County Plan for the California Democratic Party

Presented to Art Torres

Chair of the California Democratic Party

By the Democratic Visibility Committee

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I. PREMISE – ISSUES AND NEEDS

The California Democratic Party is losing market share. Over the past twelve years, there has been a steady decrease in the percentage of voters registered as Democrats. Californians everywhere seem increasingly alienated from the formal Party Structure as evidenced by high numbers of voters registered as Decline to State.

We must always hold onto our base, in both the red and blue counties, and create a reason for others to come join us. We must be visible and promote the Democratic agenda twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and three hundred sixty five days a year in every California county. Hence the formation of the Democratic Visibility Committee, an ad hoc grassroots group of red and blue county Democratic activists who have joined together to develop a Fifty-Eight County Plan for the California Democratic Party. Our Plan is based on significant successes achieved in the recent election cycle. Our aim is to work in concert with the Democratic Party Central Committee, the Democratic County Committees, the Assembly District Committees and the Democratic Clubs to make our State the true Democratic stronghold it naturally should be.

A. Red County Woes

In the red counties, many Democrats are not even aware that they may comprise as many as 40% or more of the registered voters. Since they don't know their real strength, they are far more discouraged than their numbers would warrant. We know that even in red counties voters' positions on the issues are aligned with the Democratic Party's yet we fail to win their support. Democratic activists registering voters and hosting Meetups converse with their community members. What they hear is that either voters don't trust or like our candidates, or indicate they haven't heard our message. Many feel our presidential candidate and message in 2004 was too Republican. The recurring theme is that voters think there is no real difference between the parties.

The California Democratic Party seems to be complacent with wins in solidly blue districts and think it can sacrifice the red districts without any effect on the status quo. This is a mistake. The conventional wisdom regarding "safe" seats obscures the fact that Democrats have seen a decline in both the percentage of total registration statewide, as well as in the number of counties in which they have the greater percentage of voters. There were 45 Democratic counties in 1992 and only 21 in 2004. Viewing trends in the counties provides a guide to the work we have before us.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>DTS</u>	<u>Democratic Counties</u>	<u>Republican Counties</u>
2004	43.0%	37.4%	4.6%	17.7%	21	37
2000	45.4%	34.9%	5.3%	14.4%	25	32
1996	47.2%	36.4%	5.1%	11.3%	32	26
1992	49.1%	37.0%	3.6%	10.3%	45	13

It couldn't be clearer. Democrats are losing registration share at almost the exact rate of increase in Decline to State. The reasons for this erosion are:

- Democrats sending the wrong message - *Republican-lite*,
- Democrats sending no message - *passivity in the face of Republican aggression*, and/or
- Democrats not delivering their message - *lack of red county presence due to misguided strategy*.

The good news is that while the Republicans are holding on to their base, they are not gaining ground – yet. However, to the extent that they successfully mask their radical core from public perception, they *will* make gains at the expense of the Democratic Party if we don't act decisively.

Other than minimal filing fees, the Party provides no resources for local Democratic candidates in red counties. The justification is that races below Assembly District are non-partisan. Cash is withheld that could be used as seed money for serious fund-raising efforts. Yet the Republicans don't regard these races as non-partisan at all. If a Democrat seems to have a chance of winning Republicans provide resources, sometimes from out of the jurisdiction.

Instead of withholding resources from Republican dominated areas, the very fact that there are safe Democratic seats should free the Party to engage in an all-out plan to expand the Party into the areas where there is a clear opportunity to grow. The first target should be areas where people are registering as Decline to State. These are people who naturally should be Democrats. They just don't know it.

Local Democratic Clubs and County Committees are actively engaged in voter registration and Party promotion but they need support, in both infrastructure and message. The Party agenda needs consistent proclamation and reinforcement by State Party leaders and Democratic officeholders. When officeholders stray and support strategic initiatives intended to advance Republican interests, or even admit to voting for Republican candidates, they should be rebuked. It's not surprising that the general public perceives little difference between the parties when prominent Democrats do these things.

We must never forget that to elect a Democratic Governor and Secretary of State in 2006, we need to develop and implement an aggressive plan to publicize and support the Democratic agenda so we can maximize Democratic registration and turnout in every California county.

B. Blue County Trends

The decline of the California Democratic Party is by no means limited to red counties. If anything, the shift toward "Decline to State" registrations is strongest in the bluest of the blue counties.

In Table 2. below, note the overlap of four Bay Area counties in both high Democratic and high Decline to State registration, and the complete absence of overlap with Decline to State for the ten highest registration Republican counties. Conventional wisdom is that voters in the liberal Bay Area are far to the left of the mainstream. Yet the relative strength of Decline to State compared to Green registration in blue counties shows that there are great opportunities for the Party to grow in these supposedly "left" areas. In the five core Bay Area Counties alone, over 600,000 voters are registered as Decline to State. We need to court these people and

persuade them to register as Democrats, work for the Party and donate funds to the CDP to strengthen its ability to represent their interests.

Table 2. Top Democratic Party, Republican Party, Decline to State and Green Counties in 2004

<u>Democratic Party</u>		<u>Republican Party</u>		<u>Decline to State</u>		<u>Green</u>	
Imperial	55.37%	Placer	51.83%	San Francisco	28.29%	Humbolt	5.74%
Alameda	55.27%	Sutter	50.02%	Alpine	22.97%	Mendocino	4.98%
San Francisco	54.02%	Modoc	49.56%	Santa Clara	22.95%	Santa Cruz	3.57%
Santa Cruz	53.57%	Madera	49.50%	Mono	22.58%	San Francisco	3.02%
Marin	51.23%	Shasta	48.94%	San Mateo	21.27%	Sonoma	2.75%
Los Angeles	50.75%	Kern	48.67%	Alameda	21.20%	Nevada	2.62%
Sonoma	50.02%	Tulare	48.52%	San Diego	20.51%	Marin	2.44%
San Mateo	49.05%	Orange	48.42%	Marin	19.94%	Butte	2.11%
Monterey	48.49%	Glenn	47.96%	Humbolt	19.46%	Mono	2.11%
Solano	48.36%	Mariposa	47.53%	Yolo	19.42%	Alameda	2.07%

C. Red Counties / Blue Counties - Different Sides of the Same Coin

Interestingly, Democratic voters in blue counties feel as abandoned by the Party as those in red counties, and for related reasons. The root causes are once again pervasive complacency, lack of investment in local Party identity and participation, and poor messaging. In red counties, the Party has given up without a fight. The exact same is true for the blue counties. There is no Party presence asserting the value of Democratic identity. Likewise, the comments of wayward Democratic officeholders blur Party distinctions to voters.

Campaign problems in blue counties are related to the weakness that plagues the red counties, but with a different operational result. Rather than a complete lack of funding for candidates, funds flow to incumbents who don't need the money rather than to the Party which could use it more strategically. The problem has nothing to do with ideology per se, though entrenched interests (from all sectors of the Democratic spectrum) sometimes portray it as such. In blue counties Democratic incumbents often control the entry and support of new candidates, generally former staff members. The concentration of power exercised on behalf of anointed successors in secure districts often eliminates the possibility of real competition. This in turn depresses voter and grassroots engagement. The unfortunate result is voter cynicism and a weakened Party.

In order for our Party to thrive, there needs to be a synergistic balance between the personal ambition of candidates (and their key supporters) and the energy and resources of citizens actively engaged in the process. The former is simply an expression of human nature and is likely never to be in short supply. However, planning and investment are necessary to create welcoming and constructive opportunities for the latter.

Some have said the only solution to this stultification is to end Party primaries. This is exactly the wrong "solution." We say that the correction to the problems in both red and blue areas is

Party support for grassroots organizing throughout the whole State, infrastructure support and rewards for grassroots fundraising, healthy competition in the primaries, enthusiastic unity for the general elections, and keeping Democratic officials and officeholders on message. The California Democratic Party should consciously foster all these things which will serve to energize the Party as a whole.

II. PROMISE – 2004 SUCCESSES POINT TOWARD THE FUTURE

Despite the problems described above, all is not doom and gloom. The seeds of great hope for the California Democratic Party were planted during the 2003/2004 election cycle. The influx of thousands of newly motivated Democratic activists together with important developments in communication tools, and outreach methods show how the CDP can become a strong and vibrant force in California politics and accomplish its pro-citizen agenda in the State. Grassroots activities in 2004 covered much of the ground needed to strengthen the party by developing and deploying successful models to:

1. Bring thousands of new volunteers into the Party;
2. Make Democratic gains in Republican strongholds; and
3. Develop and sustain an enduring grassroots fundraising network.

A. Nevada County Bucks the Trend

Nationwide, 153 counties that voted for Gore in 2000 went for Bush in 2004. Only 11 counties that went for Bush in 2000 chose Kerry in 2004. However, in Nevada County California, where the Republican margin of victory generally exceeds 10%, there was a distinct “blue shift” in 2004 for *all partisan offices* that was significantly greater than that for the State as a whole.

The shift was most pronounced in the Congressional and State legislative races. The increased percentages for Democratic candidates in the “down ticket” partisan races exceeded 10% in all three cases. In fact, the Democratic candidate for State Senate District 1 actually won more votes in Nevada County than the Republican did. This is a seat Democrats can flip in 2008. With sufficient candidate development there is ample cause for optimism that Democrats can compete and win a majority of votes for any office in Nevada County. The keys to this are Democratic visibility and Party support for Democrats running in “non-partisan” local races, so that eventually there will be a sufficient number of experienced and strong candidates for the Assembly, the State Senate and Congress who have already earned the trust of local voters.

Table 3. Comparison of 2000 and 2004 Election Results in California and Nevada County

	CA 2000 <u>Dem / Rep</u>	CA 2004 <u>Dem / Rep</u>	CA % Dem <u>Increase</u>	Nev. Cty. 2000 <u>Dem / Rep</u>	Nev. Cty. 2004 <u>Dem / Rep</u>	Nev. Cty. % Dem <u>Increase</u>
President	53.5 / 41.7	54.4 / 44.4	+ 0.9%	37.3 / 54.8	45.1 / 53.6	+7.8%
Senate	55.9 / 36.6	57.8 / 37.8	+ 2.1%	41.5 / 49.5	45.8 / 49.5	+ 4.3%
CD 4	---	---	---	29.4 / 58.5	42.2 / 58.7	+ 12.8%
SD 1	---	---	---	37.7 / 51.9	48.0 / 47.3	+12.3%
AD 3	---	---	---	30.2 / 57.6	40.2 / 56.3	+10.0%

These stunning results were no accident. They came about because local Democratic leaders developed a plan and worked hard to bring it about. The key was opening a year-round Democratic Headquarters to serve as an organizing base and provide on-going Democratic visibility in an area some might have assumed (wrongly) to have few Democrats. With the Headquarters and an aggressive public relations effort, Democrats found each other, made their presence known in the community and had fun doing it. When election time finally came, they were ready to deploy an effective GOTV campaign and election monitoring in every polling place. In fact, Nevada County Democrats achieved a whopping 80% turnout.

B. Californians Become Activists and Come to the Party

We don't have all the exact figures, but through our grassroots networks we know that tens of thousands of Californians heeded the call and campaigned for Kerry in one way or another. Huge numbers (probably thousands) even took personal time from their jobs and families and traveled to swing states as volunteers and key campaign leaders. Many thousands more phoned and wrote personal letters to help register voters and get out the vote. Californians also engaged in statewide and local races. With strong grassroots help, Senator Boxer won an even higher percentage of the vote than Senator Feinstein won in her last election. As a cap to an amazing year, hundreds of new grassroots volunteers were elected to the California Party State Central Committee in January. What this means for the California Democratic Party is that there are thousands of newly trained and experienced Democratic volunteers and leaders who can be called on to build the infrastructure for Democratic campaigns in 2006 and beyond.

Californians went to such states as Pennsylvania, Florida, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and New Hampshire. They found opportunities to volunteer via the internet and hooked up with nationwide organizations such as the Kerry Campaign, the Democratic National Committee, America Coming Together, MoveOn and various unions. Scores of attorneys from California monitored elections around the country. In addition to the outflow of thousands of volunteers, California-based organizations provided national leadership for campaign activities. Together, California's volunteers and organizations developed a new culture for political communication and activism. Many California-based organizations incorporated some form of "friend-to-friend" networking which is a proven successful aspect of effective campaigns. Some of the most notable grassroots oriented efforts lead by Californians:

- *Northern California Kerry Volunteer Organizations* - Coordinated swing state phone banks, letter writing and travels to 11 swing states accounting for over 1 million calls and over 2500 trips, primarily to Nevada. They held regular Meetups, house parties and voter registration efforts that involved about 10,000 volunteers in Northern CA, many of whom came from the Clark, Kucinich, Gephardt, and Dean campaigns.
- *Mainstreet Moms Oppose Bush* – Coordinated the work of 5,000 members (nearly half in California) who sent state specific voter registration forms and hand written personal letters to 250,000 unregistered single moms in swing states and another 250,000 hand written letters to under voting Democratic single moms in swing states. Many of the letters were written at letter writing parties, adding to a sense of community among volunteers.
- *Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club* (now a certified California Democratic Club) - Ran a house party effort that raised \$250,000 for ACT.

- *Physicians for A Democratic Majority* – “Demdocs” raised over \$140,000 to pay for travel expenses of volunteers (including medical students, doctors and nurses) they sent to swing states and to support Democratic Congressional and Senate candidates.
- *Turn Nevada Blue* – This partnership between California and Nevada local DFA-affiliated volunteers sponsored on-the-ground voter registration in Nevada for several months leading up to the election and GOTV during the final push.
- *Party for America* - Organized and provided the online infrastructure for 6,000 volunteers (most with sub leaders in California) to phone over 300,000 voters in swing states.
- *Advokit.net* – Free software developed for organizing and running grassroots campaigns - provides tools to combine the power of voter files, membership data and social networking to identify and communicate with supporters. Advokit has been used by the New York State Democratic Party and the Verified Voting Foundation.
- *Map the Vote* – Started by a grassroots activist, provided database management, GIS mapping and analysis for ACT’s campaign in Wisconsin.
- *DailyKos.com* – A premier and groundbreaking political blog. Fosters community among the politically aware, breaks new stories (often weeks before mainstream press) raised thousands of dollars on-line for Democratic candidates. Dailykos.com quickly raised \$100,000 in small donations for the DNC when Dean became Chair.
- *MoveOn.org* – Expanded to 3,000,000 members in 2004 with a large and devoted California base. Sponsored GOTV in swing states and raised loads of cash.
- *Democracy for America affiliates in California* – The effect of an informal statewide network of DFA affiliated organizations and individuals in California cannot be overstated. Most of the groups listed above were either derived from or in some way associated with DFA.

As remarkable as all this “start-up” activity has been, we must make sure that the strongest Democratic Campaigns are run by Democrats identifying themselves as Democrats. PACs and 527 organizations cannot promote the Party, or “build the brand.” We must learn everything we can from the best practices developed in 2003/2004 and do that for ourselves.

The great news is that grassroots volunteers are already migrating to the California Democratic Party. The election of hundreds of new Delegates and Assembly District Committee officers at the AD Committee Re-organization meetings was largely instigated by local DFA activists. They accomplished this in one short month of frenzied organizing. Most didn’t even know about AD Committees six weeks prior to the elections. In strong DFA areas, turnout for the meetings was huge. An AD where a dozen people showed up in 2003 had thirty attendees in 2005. An AD where 40 attended in 2003 had two hundred in 2005. The numbers of new delegates and officers could easily have been much higher had there been more lead time, since the word did not get out uniformly around the state.

The new delegates identify as grassroots activists who want to build a strong California Democratic Party. They are generally non-ideological and practical. This group understands and values the legacy of the Democratic Party and is fueled by a passion to secure gains made in the 20th century as well as move forward on critical issues important to all Americans such as universal health care, energy independence, a strong economy, fair laws and environmental protection. New and experienced leaders from coastal California are already taking steps to form partnerships with existing local Democratic leaders in the State’s interior in order to grow the blue, based on strong values shared by all Democrats.

C. Fundraising in Campaign 2003/2004 – A New Core Value for Californians

Californians gave generously during the 2003/2004 presidential campaign. Donations of under \$200 for Democratic presidential candidates during 2003/2004 came to \$205,000,000. A reasonable case can be made that Californians contributed at minimum according to their portion of the U.S. population, about 11% or \$22,000,000. In addition, Californians joined the rest of the country in giving huge sums to the Democratic National Committee.

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>CA Donations to DNC in 2004*</u>
# Small Donors	400,000	2,700,000	+ 675 %	297,
\$ Small Donations	\$35,000,000	\$248,000,000	+ 709 %	\$27,000,000
\$ Large Donations	\$150,000,000	\$105,000,000	- 70 %	---
Total Donations	\$185,000,000	\$353,000,000	+ 191 %	---

* Estimate - assumed proportional to U.S. population, 11%

Also, substantial small and medium donations were given to PACs and 527 organizations. Californians donated at least \$10,000,000 to ACT and MoveOn alone.

<u>PAC²</u>	<u>All Individual Contributions</u>	<u>Individual Contributions \$200 - \$5,000</u>	<u>US Individual Contributions <\$200</u>	<u>CA Individual Contributions <\$200³</u>
America Coming Together	\$33,386,665	\$13,187,388	\$20,199,277	\$2,200,000
Moveon.org	\$31,567,908	\$8,586,406	\$22,981,502	\$2,500,000

<u>PAC</u>	<u>Number of CA Contributors \$200 - \$5,000</u>	<u>Total CA Contributions \$200 - \$5,000</u>
America Coming Together	2,353	\$2,123,039
Moveon.org	4,972	\$2,914,410

¹ Source: Center for Responsive Politics

² Includes Types 15 and 15E: Direct individual contributions; Type 15J: contributions through a joint fundraiser; minus Type 22y: Refunds

³ Estimate – Assumed proportional to US population, 11%. Probable underestimate for MoveOn because high proportion of California members.

⁴ Includes only Types 15 and 15E: Direct individual contributions

III. PRACTICE – WHAT IS EFFECTIVE

Californians devoted their passion and creativity to the 2004 presidential election. A strong entrepreneurial spirit pervades the grassroots political culture here, and it is a distinctly Democratic phenomenon. In addition to an up-swelling of personal initiative, there exists a tremendous unity of spirit and action among the grassroots. Democrats in California are determined to do everything they can to win back the governorship and support much needed policies for the betterment of all who live in this beautiful State.

Our grassroots constituents know that first and foremost we must revitalize the traditional campaign ground game - because that is, was, and always will be the key to winning elections and political power.

Table 6. Effectiveness of Get Out The Vote Tactics*

<u>GOTV Effort</u>	<u>Staffing</u>	<u>Effectiveness per contact</u>
Door to door	Volunteer	1 vote per 14 contacts
Volunteer phone bank	Volunteer	1 vote per 20 - 50 contacts
Typical commercial phone bank	Paid staff	1 vote per 400 contacts
Robo calls	Non-personal	No effect
Partisan Direct mail	Non-personal	1 vote per 177 recipients
E-mail	Non-personal	No effect

* Get Out The Vote – How to Increase Voter Turnout by Donald P. Greene and Alan S Gerber

It is also clear that innovative communication technologies and social networking tools have a significant role to play in bringing together like-minded citizens so they become the volunteers and donors the California Democratic Party needs. Internet fundraising, an obviously attractive feature of 2004, is also very much a part of the web-powered political culture. However, a web site alone will not develop the interest, passion or commitment needed to get people to walk precincts, phone their neighbors and donate their hard earned dollars. Happily, campaign 2004 provided the testing ground for the *effective* use of technologies and social networking to engage Democrats politically and bring them to us.

A. Why It's Fun to Be a Democrat in Nevada County

After two years of planning and much hard work, a year-round Democratic Headquarters was opened in Nevada County in April 2004. From the start it was intended to be a very public home for local Democrats to meet each other, learn about their community, organize activities and socialize. The Open House was well publicized in the local newspaper and other media. All meetings were advertised in advance and the focus was always on action and visibility. As noted in Table 3. Nevada County volunteers succeeded in increasing the percentage of votes for Democrats in all races by 7.8% to 12.8%. Nevada County's recommendation to achieve similar and even greater success: open a year-round Democratic Party Headquarters, promote the Democratic Party, build the brand, and make it the most natural thing in the world to be a visible Democrat, no matter where you live.

Nevada County's Established Best Practices for Democratic Visibility

1. Year-round Headquarters - To be visible, people need to be able to find actual Democrats, the headquarters is where you're sure to find active Democrats.
2. Identify Democrats – Volunteer sign-up sheets and voter registration forms are always present.
3. Make sure Democratic events are featured in local TV programming.
4. Organize volunteers to attend County and City Council meetings.
5. Sponsor and publicize a local/regional speakers program on political, historical and local issues.
6. Have plenty of products available with Democratic identification: t-shirts, buttons, etc. "Proud to be a Democrat"
7. Get local Democrats involved in the community. Attend parades, fairs and civic events wearing "Democrat" t-shirts, buttons, etc. Hold debate parties, convention parties, etc.
8. Organize volunteers to protect the vote. County Central Committee Acts as a liaison between county elections office and registered Democrats.
9. Monitor all elections closely.
10. Engage teenagers to help. GOTV calls from young people motivate older people to get out and vote.
11. Establish both issue-focused and geographically focused Democratic Clubs.
12. Fundraise – Fundraise - Fundraise. Party politically and socially. Have food at events. Make it fun to be a Democrat.

Nevada County's Next Practices for Democratic Visibility in 2005

1. Getting local Democratic business owners involved.
2. Contract for clean-up of the local freeway (and get a sign!)
3. Computers for kids - Get used computers and set them up for kids who can't financially have one.
4. Get more donated furniture.

We believe these are best practices for all California counties, because every single one of them has some red/pink sectors as well as areas of neglect where under-voting is the norm. The sighting of Headquarters throughout the State will require careful, tactical thought. In some cases Democratic HQ in a couple of counties, such as Alameda and Contra Costa, could be located in neighboring cities within one electoral jurisdiction with the intent of applying concentrated effort to unseat a Republican (such as CD 11, Pombo). Alternatively, it might be preferable to site the Headquarters in fast growing suburbs, or in areas with low voter participation or high rates of Decline to State registration. We think that sighting Democratic HQ strategically in blue counties will be read as a positive signal by grassroots activists in those counties. The new volunteers from the 2004 campaign are responsive to inclusive, intelligent leadership and are already very excited about partnering with people in the red, and/or neglected areas of their counties to revitalize and grow the Party.

B. How DFA Brought the People to the Party

There's no question that the fuel for the steady burn motivating grassroots Democrats is the virulent nature of the current Republican Party as embodied by George Bush and his associates. The challenge is bringing them into the fold.

The Dean campaign developed a new organizational model and tools, some of which were then adopted by all the main national players in the effort to unseat Bush: The Kerry Campaign, the DNC, America Coming Together and MoveOn, in addition to smaller groups, which also used parts of the model and continued developing innovations. What is not generally appreciated is that Dean's mode of organizing combines central planning and leadership with power pushed out to the volunteers.

It is decidedly not a command and control model, but there is strong direction and message provided from the center. The resulting political culture is a perfect fit for the Democratic grassroots mindset. Activists get the connection, support and trust they need from the central organization, and are motivated to contribute their energy and creativity. The California Democratic Party, being the home of thousands of the most active and innovative volunteers in the country is well situated to transform itself into a powerful and effective organization by implementing a strategy in that takes advantage of the new best practices:

Meetups

Meetups provide a comfortable social space, usually a café or restaurant, for likeminded people to gather and talk about what concerns them. First Dean, and then Kerry both used Meetups to build their grassroots organizations. Meetups continue to be the core point of entry for DFA. At present there are about 50 DFA Meetups in California every month, with 1,000 attendees. DFA has a contractual relationship with Meetup so that the lists of attendees are shared each month. Informal discussions with Meetup hosts suggest that about 10 – 30% of attendees each month are new. This is how Dean rebuilt his list to over 700,000 over the past year after he created Democracy for America. Dean's list during the primary campaign was comprised of 14 – 16 % Californians. If 11% of current DFA members are Californians, then 77,000 Californians are now affiliated with DFA.

Meetups have been used for letter-writing, hearing speakers, planning events, performing "framing" exercises (ala Lakoff) and generally bringing people into local DFA organizations. They are fun. The regular social contact, without bureaucratic encumbrance, creates an entrepreneurial environment where new ideas, partnerships and friendships flourish. Sometimes Dean has participated by conference call, as he did after the election, when he asked attendees to contact him with their opinions of whether he should make an open push to become Chair of the DNC.

The CDP now has hundreds of Assembly District Committee members who are Meetup alumnae and could be called upon to run CDP Meetups. These could be developed as no-pressure gateways to the Democratic Party. In some parts of California, Democratic Meetups are announced and people show up, but either there is no leader, or supporters of Lyndon Larouche have taken over. This is very confusing to unsuspecting individuals who show up hoping to find real Democrats. However, it represents a tremendous opportunity for the CDP.

Personal attention to this by the Chair would be a great motivator. People want to feel needed and appreciated and to know that their Party is on the move toward great things.

CDP Meetups would be another tool for Democratic visibility. The trick is to plot a strategy from the center and provide "bite-sized" tactical actions that people can do right at the Meetups that contribute toward the overall goals of the organization and draw them into the Party. DCC, ADC and Dem Club officers should come to the Meetups to provide the bridge to deeper Party involvement. The formation of new Democratic Clubs could be a fundamental goal of a CDP Meetup strategy.

Online Organizing Tools

The Dean campaign pioneered the development of online tools to find, plan and manage events. These use a zip code search so people can find activities and sign up. Event hosts can email those who RSVP with updates, building excitement until the date of the event, and send thank you messages to attendees once the event has happened. At various times during the campaign, Kerry, ACT and MoveOn used the same tool. Kerry is gone and ACT & MoveOn have deleted it from their site for the time being. Only DFA is still there, providing the grassroots with an online tool to do the work 365 days per year. We are waiting to see if Dean brings it to the DNC.

An events manager tool could be another component the CDP could use to build visibility. DCCs, ADCs, the Dem Clubs, Meetup participants hosting ad hoc events, and anyone in the community could post their events to the CDP site. Once things are up and running with interesting activities, the CDP events finder would be a site that friendly organizations would link to, creating synergy and more growth.

C. Fundraising "Secrets"

The DFA online fundraising tool allows the grassroots to manage fundraising events, get credit for what they raise and incorporates graphic displays that measure success. Groups can form teams and compete with each other. The fundraising can be done strictly online with email messages from fundraisers to their friends and links to their personal fundraising pages, as well as at a house party where people can enter their donations online during the event. Both the Kerry Campaign and the DNC used forms of the DNC grassroots fundraising model (even hiring the people who developed the tools for DFA) with fabulous success in 2004.

These technology details are secondary however. Grassroots fundraising is not all that different from high donor fundraising. People want to feel confidence in their leader, connection with other people and faith in the organization. It's even better when they can have fun at the same time. People had fun at grassroots house parties, and they enjoyed watching thermometers online that tracked donations for periodic fundraising targets. Strengthening our Democratic organizations through the establishment of Party Headquarters, sponsoring social forums such as Meetups, providing online tools for grassroots-initiated events, and so on will all help provide the infrastructure to support the volunteers. When the volunteers are motivated and supported, the fundraising will succeed. As with other facets of strengthening our Party, we also need our leaders to stay on message and act in united opposition to Republican power grabs. That, more than anything else, will help us foster Party loyalty.

IV. PLAN – SOLUTIONS WE CAN DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT TOGETHER

Since we are a practical people, the Democratic Visibility is starting with one initial goal. We would like to partner with the California Democratic Party to set up Democratic Headquarters for every county in California. We believe the success in Nevada County can best be replicated all over the state by implementing this one key goal. To that end we propose a three step action plan to make it happen:

1. The Chair of the California Democratic Party signs onto this project and sends a personal letter to each County Chair endorsing the Democratic Visibility Committee's Democratic County Headquarters Plan and the California Democratic Dialogue.
2. The Chair or his designee partners with the Democratic Visibility Committee to set up, publicize and manage a grassroots fundraising drive to raise \$1,000,000 to support County Democratic Headquarters.
3. The California Democratic Party contributes the funds raised from the drive to Democratic County Committees that establish Headquarters and staff them with volunteers.

Following the success of this effort, we hope to explore additional ways to partner with the California Democratic Party to increase Democratic visibility and make all California Democrats Proud to be Democrats!