

# DEMOCRATIC REPORTER

A Newsletter for Bay Area New Democrats

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## Hot Picnic Draws Loyal Crowd

It was “stinkin’ hot” at the BAND Family Picnic and Rally, as BAND president C.J. Farley said, and that kept a lot of folks away, but those who attended managed to enjoy themselves in spite of the extraordinary heat.

The picnic on Sunday, Aug. 1 drew less than 100 people, and only a handful of kids and young adults played on the water slide and moonwalk. The big draw? Who knew? Bingo!

BAND board members Bob Tomlinson and Tonita Franklin served as moderators for several Bingo games, and BAND gave away a handful of prizes.

Most in attendance sampled the burgers, hot dogs or corn-on-the-cob from Family Cuisine. A few local and one statewide candidate braved the heat long enough to address the group.

Most inspiring was Jeff Weems, the Democratic picnic, continued on page 2



Picnic goers enjoyed Bingo games (above), fellowship with like-minded friends (top right) and splashing in the water slide (bottom right).

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*Jeff Weems, candidate for state railroad commissioner, seeks to hire enough inspectors to monitor Texas oil wells.*

*picnic, continued from page 1*

nominee for state railroad commissioner. Weems pointed out that the railroad commissioner has little to do with railroads and far more to do with oil and gas, which means whoever is elected to this office will be dealing with some timely issues.

Weems joked about promises he probably couldn't keep, such as causing everyone's home values to rise except when valued for tax purposes. Then, seriously, he promised to work hard on the campaign



*Dave Cook spoke about Democratic ideals and why we should elect more Democrats this fall.*

and later in office as well.

Other candidates who spoke at the event were: Robert Ray, candidate for First Court of Appeals, Place 8; Keith Branch, candidate for Harris County 315th Juvenile District Court, Kathy Stone, Judge, candidate for Harris County Probate Court #1; Christy Hernandez, for Lee Hernandez, candidate for constable, precinct 2 (in the 2012 election); Douglas Godinich, candidate for Galveston County Clerk; and Gordon Quan, candidate for Harris County Judge.

Longtime BAND member Dave Cook set the stage for the candidates with a rousing speech about the need to elect Democrats to office locally, in Austin and in Congress.

Also in attendance were Sylvia Garcia, Harris County precinct 2 commissioner, who is up for re-election; Paul Simon, candidate for Harris County 295th Civil District Court; Natalie Oakes, candidate for Harris County 313th Juvenile District Court; Loren Jackson, running for re-election as Harris County District Clerk; and Gerry Birnberg, Harris County Democratic Party chairperson.

The picnic was intended as a fundraiser for the Bay Area Democratic headquarters scheduled to open this month in Clear Lake. Some surprise expenses and the less-than-hoped-for attendance may mean the profit will be small, at best.

BAND already had plans for an indoor fundraiser on Oct. 7. While there won't be fun activities for the kids there, we can expect really good food. The fundraiser will take place at Dimassi's Restaurant, at Bay Area Boulevard and I-45, the same location BAND used for the presidential inauguration party in January 2009. The restaurant features a Greek and Mediterranean-style buffet. We will provide more details as the event approaches.

.....BAND Board of Directors	
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Paul Simon, Katie Kennedy and her daughter



Robert Ray



Keith Branch

## Candidates at the Picnic



Kathy Stone



Christy Hernandez, appearing for Lee Hernandez



Gordon Quan

## Local Author Proposes Shield to Ease Global Warming

A shield that would produce a small moving shadow on Earth could slow the pace of global warming, according to BAND's guest speaker in July.

Inayatullah Ibrahim Lalani, a retired surgeon who now omits the "Dr." from his title, spoke to BAND members on July 14 at the Harris County Courthouse Bay Area Annex. Lalani, the author of *Al-Battani Shield: Counteracting Global Warming*, said installing and activating the shield would be easier than reducing carbon footprints "because we are not asking anyone to dial it back."

Lalani quoted Carl Sagan, who in his *Cosmos* television series said that Earth's climate, even in the most desolate regions, is more hospitable to life than anywhere in the Solar System, because of the optimum distance from the sun and the heat emanating from Earth's interior.

According to Lalani, the interplay of factors such as the tilt of the Earth's axis, its rotation and revolution; the contours of land masses, oceans and large bodies of water; and winds and ocean currents make for a "delicate dance."

So far, humans' role in global warming is controversial and unquantifiable, said Lalani. "There is no doubt climate changes on its own," he said, but it also changes because of human activity. Climate



*BAND treasurer Mohammed Nasrullah invited Inayatullah Ibrahim Lalani to speak on a proposed solution to global warming at the July meeting.*

change has nothing to do with political ideology, according to Lalani.

Scientists who believe the Earth is undergoing climate change also believe that humans have a role in the "greenhouse phenomenon," occurring because of the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. Predictions are that rising oceans will soon put 15 to 20 percent of land masses under water and that there will be more hurricanes as well as more droughts.

Lalani asked if there were any factors affecting climate change that we can modify or modulate. He pointed out that there are some factors, such as the Earth's distance from the sun, which we cannot affect. Efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions may work in some parts of the world, but in developing countries like China, India and Russia, it may be impossible to gain their cooperation.

Lalani's proposed solution involves space engineering, which has thus far not received much traction, he acknowledged. He would like to place a barrier, called the Al-Battani Shield, 10,000 miles away from the Earth, about one percent of the distance between the Earth and the sun. The small barrier, which Lalani proposed to name for a ninth-century Arab astronomer and mathematician, would

*Al-Battani Shield, continued on page 5*



*Shielding a small portion of the Earth for a minute each day will reduce global warming, according to author Inayatullah Lalani.*

*Al-Battani shield, continued from page 4*

be stationary as the Earth rotated and its small umbra would sweep the tropical areas between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

Lalani likened the shield to a beachgoer's umbrella, a miniature solar eclipse. During the Earth's rotation, the shield would block the sun's rays for only a minute in any area under its orbit. The umbra would cover an area of about 30 square kilometers at a time. The brief eclipse that would circle the world every 24 hours would arguably provide just the right amount of temperature drop to counteract global warming.

His proposal is neither quantum physics nor science fiction, Lalani said. The idea comes from a combination of "rocket science" and differential calculus, but it would need lots of money, international cooperation, leadership and political will to bring it to fruition, he said.

A BAND member asked about cost, and Lalani answered that he envisioned countries around the world chipping in. He thought the most difficult aspect of his proposal was keeping the shield in orbit. Lalani would also like to see the heat gathered by the shield reflected back into space for harvest on earth.



*Natalie Oakes (top left), Gerry Birnberg (middle left) and Sylvia Garcia (above) mingled with BAND members at the picnic on Aug. 1. At left, board member Bob Tomlinson and his grandson tried their hand at the washer toss game.*

## Letter to the Editor by Lloyd Criss

On page one of Friday's local newspapers, I read where legislation co-authored by U. S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson to stabilize the NASA workforce had passed out of a Senate committee. First, I want to commend Sen. Hutchinson for her support for legislation that is very important to our community.

Now, I want to provide more information based on U. S. Senate records on the status of this legislation and its probable future. U. S. Sen. Bill Nelson, a Democrat from Florida, is the principal author of this legislation. Becoming a co-author in any legislative body requires the approval of its principal author.

Sen. Nelson, a former astronaut, also serves as chair of the committee. Passage was 100 percent bipartisan. It passed by voice vote, which means every committee member in both parties voted in the affirmative.

The Obama administration is also expected to support the bill. On Wednesday, an administration official said the measure "appears to contain

the critical elements necessary for achieving the President's vision of NASA."

Organized labor interests led by the Association of Machinists worked with Sen. Nelson and the committee in support of the legislation. The House has not yet acted on the bill, but with bipartisan Senate backing and the administration's support, the legislation is likely to pass. U. S. Reps. Gene Green and Al Green of Houston will be leaders in securing passage in the House of Representatives.

This NASA legislation provides an example of what can be accomplished when elected officials meet their responsibilities and work together for the common good. When they work together, everyone wins. When extremism, hate speech, deception and obstructionism are employed by politicians on both national and local levels, the victims are the people whom they were elected to represent.

*Editor's note: Lloyd Criss, chair of the Galveston County Democratic Party, mailed this letter to local newspapers.*



*BAND members and guests kept their cool on a hot day at the BAND Family Picnic and Rally.*