



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 13, 2011

Bohemian Grove: Where the Elite Meet to Eat (and Conspire)

Debra Saunders complained that, because she is a woman, she wasn't invited to the upcoming Bohemian Club meeting which begins this Thursday at the Bohemian Grove retreat center an hour's drive north of San Francisco. Even if she were a man, she most likely still wouldn't be invited as she is not a member of the "elite."

Founded just after the Civil War by Henry Harry Edwards as a private camp where bohemians artists and writers could go to relax and recuperate from the rigors of the work-a-day world, over time the club's membership evolved to include the rich and powerful, which now numbers [over 2,400](#). The secrecy imposed about the annual meetings has led many to speculate as to the purposes and impact such a conclave might have on the nation's affairs, especially when membership lists included every Republican President since 1923 (and some Democrats), many cabinet officials, and CEOs of large corporations including the major financial institutions. Military contractors, oil companies, banks (including the Federal Reserve) and national media all have high-ranking officials as either members or guests.

Despite the club's motto: Weaving Spiders Come Not Here, (see club emblem, above left) plenty of business, both economic and political, has been done there. As noted in Peter Phillips' [dissertation](#) for his doctorate in philosophy at the University of California, Davis, The Bohemian Grove has long been a political networking point for Republicans along with significant numbers of cabinet members and White House officials. [Dwight] Eisenhower gave a premier political address at the Grove in 1950, setting himself on the path to the presidency. In addition, he noted,

Presidential hopeful Nelson Rockefeller flew into the Grove [to give a] Lakeside Chat in 1963 and [Richard] Nixon and [Ronald] Reagan sat down informally at the Grove in 1967 to work a political deal wherein Reagan was to run [for President] only if Nixon faltered.

The Grove became famous when word leaked out about a Manhattan Project meeting that took place there in September of 1942, which led subsequently to the development of the atom bomb. Attending that meeting were a number of high-ranking military officers, the president of Harvard University, and





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representatives of Standard Oil and General Electric.

In his memoirs, Richard Nixon amplified the importance of his membership in the Bohemian Club:

If I were to choose the speech that gave me the most pleasure and satisfaction in my political career, it would be my Lakeside Speech at the Bohemian Grove in July, 1967. Because this speech traditionally was off the record, it received no publicity at the time. But *in many important ways* it marked the first milestone on my road to the presidency. [Emphasis added.]

It was an emotional assignment for me and also an unparalleled opportunity to reach some of the most important and influential men

Gerald Ford enjoyed the power, prestige, and influence of the Bohemians when Nixon's presidency was flaming out. He was invited to attend the club by Bohemian member Leonard Firestone of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. As recorded by Phillips, Firestone asked Bohemian member Loyall McLaren to introduce Ford around to as many members as possible. Said McLaren:

I had a call from Leonard Firestone, who was having Mr. Ford as a guest at his camp, and he wanted to know about rounding the thing out, to give him an interesting time and enable him to meet as many people, useful people, as possible. So I thought the thing to do was to have some rather small parties at two or three of the different camps.

Remarked Phillips, This is an important disclosure on how political networking happens at the Grove. Ford was able to meet approximately 150 top level Republican corporate leaders in a matter of two days.

Phillips also illustrated the elitist mentality of the Bohemian Club members by noting another Lakeside Chat given in June, 1994, by a political science professor from U.C. Berkley: The chat was entitled Violent Weakness, which focused on how increasing violence in society was weakening our social institutions.

The speaker claimed that to avert further deterioration, we need to recognize that elites based on merit and skill are important to society. (loud clapping). Any elite that fails to define itself will fail to survive ... We need boundaries and values set and clear! We need an American-centered foreign policy and a President who understands foreign policy.

[The speaker] went on to conclude that we cannot allow the unqualified masses to carry out policy, but that elites must set values that can be translated into standards of authority.

This speech was forcefully given and was received with an enthusiastic, standing ovation by most members

From the reaction of Bohemians to the chat, it was apparent that the term *elite* is a self-identifier for many Club members, and that because of that identity they feel they have an obligation and right to set the political policies and direction for America.

In another remarkable insight into the power and influence of Bohemian Club members, Phillips revealed how tight those members were during historical moments of great import to America:

One of the foremost political events in which the Bohemian political network played a significant role was the United Nations Conference [held from] April 25th to June 26th, 1945 in San Francisco. This was the original formation meeting for the United Nations, with delegates from fifty nations. Receptions for UNCIO delegates and key dignitaries were held at the Bohemian Club



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on May 17th, May 29th, June 4th and June 5th. Towards the end of the U.N. conference the Club invited all delegates to a program at the Grove

The Club and its members were major players in hosting the U.N. delegates. This participation was closely interlocked with the U.S. military and a definite case wherein Bohemian social boundaries formally extended into the political arena.

The influence of the Bohemian Club is often overshadowed by the [machinations](#) of the Bilderberg meeting that was just held in June in St. Moritz, Switzerland, which for all intents and purposes is an international version of the Bohemian Club. As Anthony Wile [wrote](#) for the *Daily Bell*:

The impact that the Bohemian Club has on the modern world economy and recent world history cannot be overestimated. The real truth about secret organizations like the Bohemian Club is that the members are prominent international figures

The general idea is events that occur across the world are often instigated by informal agreements and discussions during this two-week event in the California redwood forest. While no one knows exactly who is behind these annual events, suspicions are that those impossibly wealthy banking families located in the City of London use these affairs to inform their intimates of the annual agenda. The result somehow always seems to support and enhance global governance.

One of the wonders of the Internet is that slowly, surely, the disinfectant light of day is beginning to shine into the dark corners of these secret organizations, and with such exposure comes increasing pressure to limit the damage they intend. One way is to recognize some of the names of those on the current Bohemian Club roster, [including](#):

Lamar Alexander, James Baker, Riley and Stephen Bechtel (Bechtel Corporation), Nicholas Brady (Treasury Secretary under Reagan and Bush I), David Broder (journalist for the *Washington Post* until his death in March), George H. W. Bush, George Bush, Joseph Califano, Jimmy Carter, William Casey (former CIA director), General Lucius D. Clay, Tony Coelho, Joseph Coors, Clint Eastwood, Edwin Feulner (Heritage Foundation), Henry Kissinger, Edwin Meese, General Colin Powell, David Rockefeller, Donald Rumsfeld, George Schultz, and Ken Starr.



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