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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

Hotel Workers Organizer to Speak at the Next ACT Meeting

The speaker for the Thursday, March 6 ACT Steering Committee meeting is Rachel Torres, a research analyst and community organizer with UNITE HERE Local 11, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union of Los Angeles and Orange County.

The City of Pasadena is experiencing a wave a of new hotel development. Torres will discuss the impact of these projects, especially the growth of poverty wage jobs, and ways the community can create more responsible development.

The meeting will begin with coffee at 7 p.m. followed by the program at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Bobbie & Henry Moon, 1961 Mar Vista Ave., Altadena. All members are welcome and urged to attend Steering Committee meetings.

Please note that we have gone back to the first Thursday of the month schedule for all future ACT Steering Committee and ADC meetings. Check *ThePhoenix* Calendar and our website for meeting locations at <http://www.ACTPasadena.org>.



ACT Civil Rights Activist Honored in Sacramento

We are delighted to extend our congratulations to **Dolores Hickambottom**, long time civil rights activist - and our dear friend - who was recognized and honored as an "Unsung Hero of the Civil Rights Movement" at a ceremony at the State Capitol on February 10.



Progressive Discussion Group

Special guest Stella Murga, Chair of the Pasadena Latino Coalition, will discuss the topic "Latino Community Issues that Progressives Should Be Concerned About" at the Progressive Discussion Group meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, February 21, at Coco's Restaurant at the SW corner of Lake and Union in Pasadena.

Everyone is welcome. See calendar for info.

February, 2014

Dear ACT Member:

Once again, it's time to renew your annual membership in ACT!

In between the high-intensity drama of Presidential years, political life only seems calmer. In truth, events in the "off season" have enormous impact on our lives -- and membership in ACT is both your window on these events and your opportunity to help influence them for the better.

Last year, local voters made choices that will affect our city, our schools and PCC for years to come. They lifted up new faces who will likely go on to contend for higher levels of leadership. This year, we will choose representatives in Congress and the Legislature. Critical and far-reaching state initiatives will be debated. And, locally, candidates for Mayor will begin campaigning.

ACT members are right in the thick of every development. Our research and endorsement process helps our members understand the issues, know the players, meet and question contenders, and take part in their campaigns.

This year we're also making a special effort to encourage discussion and action on critical issues -- from national problems like health care and growing inequality, to local concerns like whether or not more civilian oversight is needed for the Pasadena Police Department. Meetings, open to all members, will feature speakers and forums on these and other issues -- as well as election analysis, Q&A with key local decision-makers, and more.

ACT also continues to be a great place to meet other politically engaged people. And our "sister" organization, the Arroyo Democratic Club, offers a way to get involved in the Democratic Party -- from running the local headquarters to serving on the State Central Committee. Plus, as an ACT/ADC member, you'll continue to receive our monthly newsletter, *The Phoenix*, with some of the liveliest political commentary and analysis you'll find anywhere.

In 2013 we had fun celebrating our 40th anniversary. But our goal is not just to be the oldest progressive organization in the area. We also want to be the best and most effective voice for advancing a progressive agenda TODAY, when the stakes for our nation, our state and our community have never been higher.

The key to reaching that goal is you: Your membership, your participation, your support. So please, send your check in the enclosed envelope, or renew on-line at www.actpasadena.org. Your continuing membership will keep the flag of progressive politics flying in the Pasadena - Foothill area.

Anthony Portantino
ACT Co-Chair

Felicia Williams
ACT Co-chair

Linda Centell
ACT Co-chair

P.S. If you can, please consider being a Sustaining Member or Patron; your special generosity is critical to our ability to be an effective voice in the political arena.

2014 Steering Committee and ADC Officers

ACT and the Arroyo Democratic Club elected new officers in January. Linda Centell is our new Co-Chair - for 2014-2015. She joins Co-Chairs Felicia Williams and Anthony Portantino during their second year. Ed Washatka is our new Treasurer and Barbara Paul, our new Recording Secretary. Beth Gertmenian stays on as Corresponding Secretary. Bill Hackett and Tim Wendler have agreed to continue as President and Vice-President of ADC, respectively. Thanks to all.

We welcome some new committee leaders too: Susan Kane and Ralph Hurtado will co-lead the new Issues Committee; Dale Gronemeier will head the Outreach Committee; Monica Hubbard will join in leading the Program Committee and Marilee Marshall will head up the Research Committee (with a Co-Chair to help with the considerable labor involved in that job).

2014 ACT Steering Committee

Co-Chairs – Felicia Williams, Anthony Portantino, Linda Centell

Recording Secretary – Barbara Paul

Corresponding Secretary – Beth Gertmenian

Treasurer – Ed Washatka

Committees:

Communications – Wendy Gordon

Computer/Web Page – Fred Register, Bruce Wright, Jon Fuhrman, Bobbie Moon, Henry Moon, Elliot Cuite, Ross Mitchell

Election Procedures – Ann Hunnewell, Jon Fuhrman

Fundraising – Wendy Soltes, Fred Register, Jeanne Register, Anne Wolf, Linda Centell, Bill Hackett, Teresa Lamb Simpson, Jim Heringer, Anthony Portantino

Issues – Susan Kane, Ralph Hurtado

Membership – Neal Wrightson, Ralph Hurtado, Connie O'Donnell, Sally Beer, Jeanne Register, Anne Wolf, Jeanette Mann, Jon Fuhrman, Susan Kane, Chuck Hains

Mailing – Sally Beer, Ellen Coles, Tom Hubbard, Jon Fuhrman, Joe Pardee, Jim Heringer, Nellie Moore, Inman Moore, Ray Fisher, Barbara Paul

Outreach – Dale Gronemeier, Skip Hickambottom, John McLean, Carolyn Carlburg, Jon Fuhrman

ThePhoenix – Chuck Hains, Sally Beer

Program – Inman Moore, Monica Hubbard, Wendy Gordon, Dolores Hickambottom, Carolyn Carlburg, John Buchanan

Research – Marilee Marshall, John McLean, Roberta Martinez, Susan Kane, George VanAlstine, Brian Walsh, Bruce Wright, Jeanette Mann, Jon Fuhrman, Jim Heringer, Dolores Hickambottom, Inman Moore, Bill Creim, Tim Wendler, Joanne Wendler, Geoff Baum, Garrett Schneider, Jackie Cannon-Jones, Anthony Portantino, Monica Hubbard, Emily Stork, Michael Cornwell, Allan Eisenman, Peter Wong, Betty Krachman, Vickere Murphy, Taylor Dark, Beth Gertmenian, Ralph Hurtado, Adam Murray, Kevin Sea, Tarek Shawky, Ed Washatka, Felicia Williams, Marguerite Cooper, Ray Fisher, Lacreata Scott

NOTE: All former ACT Co-Chairs are Steering Committee members. Some of them are not listed here.

2014 Arroyo Democratic Club Officers

President – Bill Hackett

Vice-President – Tim Wendler

Secretaries and Treasurer – Same as ACT

As you can see, our list has grown very long in these 40 years. So...please let us know if you see any mistakes - especially about your committee assignment(s). Also please let us know if you would like to serve on an ACT Committee (and thus the Steering Committee). Contact Jon at 626-795-5255 or jon.fuhrman@charter.net.

Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Tuesday, February 11.

After each crisis, you think the Republican leadership couldn't reach greater heights of cynicism and hypocrisy, but each time they prove us wrong. Tuesday's vote on the debt limit is just another spectacular case in point.

Speaker Boehner brought a "clean" debt limit bill to the floor which passed with votes from 193 Democrats and all of 28 Republicans. The bill, though, did not actually increase the debt limit. Instead, it merely suspended the limit until March 16, 2015, and sets the new limit to whatever the debt is at that time. So there is no dollar figure in the bill, and even those voting in favor can't be accused of increasing the debt limit by "x" dollars.

Clearly, the Speaker and many of his caucus members agreed that we can't simply stop the government from paying its lawful debts. Yet

vanishingly few in the GOP caucus had the courage of their convictions. The 28 yeas votes included the Speaker and his two top leaders, the chairmen of the Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees, four other members who are retiring, nine more centrist members from the Northeast -- most of whom face tough re-election fights in districts that President Obama carried -- and six Californians from the Central Valley and Inland Empire, along with four other moderates from around the country. Among the many not with the Speaker were Paul Ryan, Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers (who delivered the official Republican reply to the State of the Union), the GOP's Policy Committee chair and all the deputy whips, the entire Tea Party brigade, and many other members who are not hardcore but who lacked the courage to defy the extremists.

Already, several of the far right and Tea Party groups are demanding that Boehner be booted from the Speakership. My guess, though, is that most of the caucus members know exactly what Boehner is doing and appreciate being spared from having openly to vote for a debt extension. Probably 60 to 70 House members might actually vote to oust the Speaker, if they had a candidate, but no one has come forward yet. That's probably a good thing, although I confess a certain joy at watching the Republican caucus careen toward self-destruction.

One of the reasons most caucus members seemed perfectly happy with the outcome is that their focus is on the mid-term elections. The conventional wisdom now is that the GOP should do nothing to rock the boat; rather, they should just attempt to pillory Democrats on the Affordable Care Act and wait until they win the Senate, along with House, and then take on the President in 2015 with a united front. There is some logic to that, based on the public bashing the GOP took when they shut

down the government in October. But the problems with this strategy are three-fold: doing nothing for the rest of the year simply exposes the GOP to greater criticism; the economy is far more likely to get better than to get worse, which would reduce the GOP's chances for success; and winning the Senate is not nearly as likely as some pundits now predict.

Winning the Senate is a dicey proposition. True, Democrats are defending seats in deeply red states where we should be vulnerable. Yet some of those are holding up quite well – Democrats now have a double-digit lead in Alaska, one of the GOP's key targets. In Montana, incumbent Max Baucus was just confirmed as Ambassador to Japan, and the Lt. Governor was appointed to his seat, gaining some advantage from the incumbency. In Louisiana, despite substantial ads from Super-PAC's, Democratic incumbent Mary Landrieu still leads in the polls, albeit by the slimmest of margins. To make matters worse, in Kentucky, Democratic challenger Alison Grimes now has a 4-point lead over Minority



Leader Mitch McConnell. Losing Kentucky -- or Georgia or Maine, where strong Democratic challengers also are emerging -- would sink Republican hopes for winning the Senate. Lastly, Tea Party extremists are still waging strong campaigns against Republican incumbents in Mississippi, Kansas and other states. Moreover, it's not just Senate candidates that face this problem; more than half the National Republican Campaign Committee's "Young Gun" candidates in the House -- people specifically recruited by the national GOP as potential new stars -- are locked in tough primaries.

It's still way too early to make any serious predictions, but it does seem clear to me that doing nothing is a dangerous course of action. One early signal as to whether the debt limit

extension has hurt the GOP may be Florida's special Congressional election, scheduled for March 11. The GOP candidate, David Jolly, was a chief staffer to Cong. Bill Young, who passed away last October, before spending six years as a DC lobbyist. Although he has gathered endorsements from John McCain, Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush, the district went for President Obama in both 2008 and 2012. Special elections, though, often have low turnouts and hence can be dominated by ideological extremists. Will the Tea Party extremists turn away from the GOP, based on its failure to win any of the battles over the budget, appropriations or debt limit? The Democratic

candidate, Alex Sink, a former state Chief Financial Officer and gubernatorial candidate, had a four-point lead in the polls in late January. GOP PACs, though, are pouring over \$1.2 million into Jolly's campaign. My guess is that Sink will win decisively, leading to some serious infighting on the GOP side.

Are economic conditions really getting better, or are we basically treading water? The jobs reports

for December and January were more on the treading water side, although the payroll-processing company ADP reported substantially higher estimates of job creation. The stock market certainly seems robust, the unemployment rate continues to drop, and the Labor Dept.'s household survey suggested substantially more job growth than its companion jobs survey did. And the fed's tax revenues for the first quarter were substantially higher than predicted.

While the national data seem to be a bit muddled, the data here in California continue on the positive side. Gov. Brown submitted a budget for the 2014 - 2015 year in January, and readjusted estimates for revenue for the rest of this year. But the January receipts

came in nearly \$400 million above those estimates, done just weeks ago. Much of that gain came from payroll tax withholding, suggesting continued strong and steady growth in the labor market. If this continues, the Legislature will have even more flexibility to support education and mend the social safety net that we've shredded over the last few years. Now if we can only fix the drought, we'd be in good shape.

--Jon Fuhrman



League Double Header Program

The League of Women Voters Pasadena Area will present a double header at its monthly forum:

The Evolving Face of Public Libraries and

Why Pasadena Needs a Housing Commission

Speakers are Jan Sanders, Director of Pasadena Public Libraries, and Michelle White, Executive Director of Affordable Housing Services.

**Thursday, March 6, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Pasadena Women's City Club,
160 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena**

The forum is open to the public. The program is free; lunch is \$25 including tax and tip. Reservations are advised to assure adequate seating. The number to call is 626-798-0965



Special Thanks to Our Sustaining Members

Ellen Coles, Altadena
James & Ginny Heringer, Pasadena



ACT / NAACP / Latino Coalition Forum Scheduled -

Topic: Increased Civilian Oversight of the Pasadena Police Department

ACT, the Pasadena NAACP, and the Pasadena Latino Coalition will sponsor a forum on increased civilian oversight of the Pasadena Police Department on Tuesday, March 25 at the Pasadena Public Library from 7-8:45 p.m. ACT Co-Chair **Anthony Portantino** will moderate the program.

Two speakers have committed to make preliminary 15-minute informational presentations: (1) **Brian Buchner**, an employee of the City of Los Angeles' Inspector General's Office and the President of the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) will discuss different approaches to civilian oversight; and (2) **Pasadena Police Chief Phillip Sanchez** will discuss the topic "Current administrative investigation protocols and oversight by the Pasadena Police Department." Also invitations are out to 2 speakers to debate whether increased civilian oversight of the Pasadena PD is desirable.

KPAS will record and broadcast the forum.



Progressive Shakespeare Theatergoers:

The Progressive Shakespeare Theatergoers will watch *MacBeth* at A Noise Within at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 27, and then have dinner afterward at the Panda Inn. Good seats are available at the group rate of \$39. For further information contact Dale Gronemeier at dlg@dgronemeier.com.



Welcome New & Returning ACT Members:

Linn & Robert Hummel, Altadena

Wonderings and Wanderings

By Inman Moore



A Difficult Problem

I recently sat down beside Tenjin, the famous 9th Century Indian philosopher, in Caltech's Garden of the Associates. He was all cleaned up—no bird droppings. I said, "Tenjin, you look really nice." "Yes," he replied. Caltech is taking good care of me these days. What brings you down to the Garden today?" I responded, "Tenjin, I have a problem. It stems from the fact that our political discourse seems totally out of bounds these days. If we don't like an idea, we try to demonize the propagator of the idea. We call people whose ideas we don't like idiots, stupid, senile, reprehensible, unpardonably evil, demonic, scheming, etc.

We tend to forget that some things we are for today we were opposed to at some yesterday.

As a kid, I thought of God as someone to be afraid of. At any moment he was going to zap me for some offense. My concept of God today is totally different. I thought of homosexuals as persons to stay away from. I saw nothing wrong that there were no women ministers, lawyers, or doctors. Our high school had a boys' basketball team but no girls' team. It didn't bother me that there were no blacks in professional jobs and were largely segregated from the rest of society, and that Christian prayers were said in school classrooms, even though there were kids there who were Jews, and from families with no religion. I have totally different opinions about all of these categories today.

Let's remind ourselves that we may have once thought like our opponent. Before we get so high and mighty about our righteousness let's remind ourselves that we often break the law. How many of us strictly obey the speed limits in town and on the open highway? I heard the

other day that if all the cars in California were placed in a single line 98% of them would pull out to pass. Anybody ever forget to fasten a seatbelt? Ever knowingly park where you are not supposed to, or walk across the street where there is no crosswalk? Anybody ever cheat just a wee bit on their tax reports?

For example, Dr. Peter Dreier, famous professor at Occidental College, accused me of a little white lie when I introduced him recently at a Pete Seeger remembrance ceremony and I said his book, The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century--A Social Justice Hall of Fame, was a best seller. He reminded me that his book is not on the New York Times bestseller list. I responded, 'Yes, but it has sold a lot of copies.'

I realize that some of our leaders in both our political parties do criminal things that should rightfully be legally dealt with. Egregious law breakers have to be dealt with decisively, but let's not get too high and mighty about how righteous we are. I realize that some people seem to think that all people who disagree with them are idiots and criminals. Talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and Mark Levin fit into that category. Yes, some people do call us monsters. But we don't have to do the same in return. We don't have to stoop to their level.

I am beginning to understand that we don't change people's minds by calling them names. We change our minds by education, civil discourse, and by genuine concern for all men and women. Our two major parties make a big mistake by looking on the opposition as scurrilous mean-spirited, evil monsters.

Tenjin listened patiently as I talked about my predicament and said, "Inman, I haven't said anything. Did it help you solve your problem by telling me about it?" After thinking for a moment, I replied, "Yes, I believe it did. Thanks for listening!"

-- Inman

Next San Gabriel Valley Democratic Women's Club Meeting

The Friday, March 14 meeting of the SG Valley Democratic Women's Club will feature Anthony Portantino on the political science class he teaches at USC and an update on the recent Rim of the Valley meeting. The meeting will be at 10 a.m. at a location to be determined. The meeting will be at 10 am at Sara Carnahan's, 2525 Highland Ave., Altadena. Everyone is welcome..

The SGVDW's Club meets on the second Friday of the month, September through June. Everyone is welcome. You do not need to be a club member to attend.



John Tennant

Former Pasadena Fire Captain and state Fire Marshall **John Tennant** died in December after a battle with cancer. John was honored at a celebration of his life at the Pasadena Civic auditorium on February 5. He joined the Pasadena Fire Department in 1972. He was elected president of Pasadena Local 809 in 1985, serving for 15 years. In 1994 he was elected to the California Professional Firefighters Association board and was appointed the state fire marshal in 2000. During these years he was an ACT member as well.



We extend our sympathy to John's children Shawna, Lisa and Brian and to his brother Mark.



Special Thanks to Our Patrons

Mary Hayden & Carla Tomaso, Pasadena
Susan Kane & Jon Fuhrman, Pasadena

Thanks to Skipper Rostker for a Generous Donation of Political Memorabilia

Skipper Rostker has been involved in Democratic Party politics for a very long time and the memorabilia he donated to ACT proves it. There are nearly 500 buttons and campaign items dating back to Harry S. Truman. There is a campaign poster for JFK and Cranston. There are lots of Humphrey / Muskie items.

Thanks to Skipper, we now have official presidential pictures of Truman, Kennedy and Johnson for our United Democratic Headquarters. McGovern material includes maybe 70 buttons and posters - including the poster for the Carole King/James Taylor/Barbara Streisand Forum Concert for McGovern.

We plan to sort through the 5 boxes of material, taking some historical items for the ACT files now stored at the Pasadena Historical Museum, and then, selling other items (like the buttons) to support the 2014 and 2016 United Democratic Headquarters.

There is also material on the desegregation suit involving the PUSD. As many of you know, the Rostkers were one of the plaintiff families on that case.

Murphy Rostker delivered the boxes to my house a couple of weeks ago and I have had a grand time looking through it.

Ralph Hurtado



And really special thanks to Our Benefactors

Linda Centell & Ed Washatka, Pasadena
Marilee Marshall & Bruce Wright, Pasa.
Kip Thorne & Carolee Winstein, Pasa.

And Thanks for Additional Contributions

Ellen Coles, Altadena

**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**

Dear ACT Friends,



One of the pleasures of working in the Assembly is recognizing some of the amazing residents of the 41st Assembly District. I am pleased to announce that on February 10 we honored longtime ACT member Dolores Hickambottom at the state Capitol as an “Unsung Hero of the Civil Rights Movement” for her lifetime of advocacy for social, political and educational opportunities.

Dolores has been a tireless advocate not only for civil rights but also for women and children. She, along with her husband Elbie, helped to integrate the Pasadena public schools during a time of racial divide in Pasadena schools. She was also instrumental in starting the Pasadena Educational Foundation. Dolores went on to be a founding member of the P.C.C. African-American Advisory Board and Mustangs on the Move at Muir High.

Many in the community will remember her efforts in helping to elect Pasadena’s first African-American Mayor, Loretta Thompson Glickman in the early eighties. Dolores went on to serve as the Mayor’s field representative and later served on the staffs of State Senators Walter Stiern, Richard Polanco and Jack Scott.

What you may not know is that Dolores was a member of the U.S. Army during the Korean War and has been active in Veteran’s issues and the Los Angeles chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen. She has served on many, many community boards and remains active in politics and education.

Congratulations Dolores Hickambottom on a

well-deserved honor.

The Assembly is back in session and our agendas are packed with planning meetings and discussions of new legislation. Feb 28 is the last day to introduce bills, so you can imagine the next few weeks will be hectic ones. I look forward to sharing details on proposed legislation as well as issues of concern to the district at my annual Open House.

Save the date:

Assemblymember Holden Open House
Thursday, March 20 from 5 to 7 p.m.
600 N. Rosemead Blvd, Pasadena
Light Refreshments

-- Chris R. Holden

Assemblyman. Holden represents some 420,000 people in the foothills communities of Altadena, Pasadena, South Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Monrovia, San Dimas, La Verne, Claremont, and Upland. He can be reached via his website at: www.asm.ca.gov/holden and fill out the contact form.



Chris Holden, Dolores Hickambottom and civil rights pioneer Dr Clarence Jones at the Black History Celebration.

From 25th District State Senator Carol Liu...



Sacramento Update

Recently, the Senate Democratic Caucus met for members to share their priorities for the coming year. I'd also like to share them with you. As you know education is and has always been my number one priority. But, my agenda is formulated around my philosophy that *if you break the cycle of poverty, you can break the cycle of crime, and education is the key*. I am particularly interested in improving outcomes for women and girls. Women and their children are disproportionately represented among the poor. In addition, research shows that the success of a child in school and in life is directly correlated with the academic attainment of the mother.

My legislative agenda reflects this philosophy. I also "ground truth" my legislative agenda with complementary programs in the District. These include 1) **roundtables** to solicit input from stakeholders on both policy development and policy implementation and 2) **pilot programs** that network and coordinate activities of advocates, stakeholders, and organizations to advance public policy and produce meaningful outcomes. These efforts include:

- **Pathways to Wellbeing and Economic Prosperity**— my anti-poverty program;
- **GREEN21** – a sustainable environment and economy program;
- The **Community Schools** Initiative;
- **Early childhood education** roundtable;
- **Common Core** (and LCFF implementation) roundtable;

- **Public Safety** (realignment) roundtable; and
- **Veterans Internship** pilot program.

To advance my priority agenda, I have or am planning to introduce legislation to support the expansion of:

1. School-based health care, which provides a solid foundation for the further implementation of community schools strategy;
2. Early childhood education (with an emphasis on 0-3);
3. Adult education; and
4. Re-entry and rehabilitation for the formerly incarcerated.

I also plan legislation to create a state earned income tax credit (EITC) that will benefit the working poor.

Finally, I am conducting informational hearings to lay the foundation for legislation on teacher preparation and professional development and, providing my request for creation of a Select Committee is approved, on Aging and Long Term Care.

One final note on the 2014 priority agenda, with a declaration of drought in California we need to conserve water. Southern California has a strong water conservation ethic but we can do more. Promising areas of conservation include water reuse, water wise landscaping, and retrofitting water conserving devices in homes and businesses. Please visit water conservation tips at www.SaveOurH2O.org.

For more information on my legislation and programs visit <http://sd25.senate.ca.gov> or call my District Office at 818.409.0400.

Sen. Liu represents about 930,000 people in the 25th Senate District, which includes Burbank, Glendale, Atwater Village, Sunland-Tujunga, Pasadena, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Montrose, Altadena, San Marino, South Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Monrovia, Bradbury, Duarte, Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, Claremont, and Upland.

**From
43rd District
Assemblymember
Mike Gatto**



**California Issues Regula-
tions to Implement Assemblyman Mike
Gatto's Landmark Green-Energy Bill**

It's not every day that I get to champion a single effort that puts Californians to work, cleans our air, and keeps utility bills low. But, with the assistance of the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC), I'm excited to announce the creation of an entirely new clean-energy industry in the Golden State.

Biomethane is a natural gas produced by decomposing matter. It is a by-product of many regular activities. Landfills, water-treatment plants, and livestock all produce it. Once cleaned, it can be burned in electricity-producing facilities, natural-gas-powered vehicles, and home appliances. In addition to serving as a source of energy, using (instead of releasing) biomethane also helps reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and protect the natural environment. Unfiltered, it is 21 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Creating an in-state biofuel industry is common sense. We can produce renewable power in our state from sources that occur naturally. Unfortunately, outdated laws and a lack of regulation banned this renewable form of natural gas from being injected into California pipelines by local entities.

That's why I've spent the past two years sorting out the bureaucratic barriers of entry and advocating for the creation of an in-state biofuel industry. In 2012, I authored two bills that required the PUC to adopt public-safety and pipeline-safety standards for biomethane, as well as monitoring and reporting stan-

dards, which would allow the renewable fuel to be used in California. This legislation was supported strongly by the City of Pasadena, because they wished to invest in this renewable source of energy and make their municipal portfolio cleaner. My bills were able to accomplish those goals and keep rates low for Pasadenans.

In January, the PUC voted unanimously to adopt new rules for the injection of biogas into the state's natural-gas pipelines. I'm proud to announce that utilities around California will be able to begin using biomethane to bring clean, low-cost, and renewable natural gas to their customers.

Mike Gatto is the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the California State Assembly. He represents Burbank, Glendale, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Montrose, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Atwater Village, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, Hollywood Hills, Los Feliz, and Silver Lake. www.asm.ca.gov/gatto



**First Meeting of New *Issues*
Committee on February 20th**

The new Issues Committee, co-chaired by Ralph Hurtado and Susan Kane, will hold its first meeting on Thursday, February 20, at 7:00pm at the home of Susan Kane and Jon Fuhrman. We invite any ACT member who wants to join the committee or has an issue for the committee to consider. Issues should NOT be topics for which ACT has taken (or will soon take) an endorsement position (i.e., past or upcoming ballot initiatives). After careful research and discussion, the committee may recommend to the Steering Committee and, in turn, to ACT's full membership that ACT formally take a position on an important issue of the day -- and then advocate for that position with local, state or federal legislators. PLEASE JOIN US ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH.

Water or Oil?

By John Grula, reprinted from the *Pasadena Weekly* with permission

Gov. Brown needs to declare a moratorium on fracking in ecologically fragile California



California is in the midst of a water crisis. A Jan. 3 survey of the Sierra Nevada snowpack, conducted by the state's Department of Water Resources (DWR), found it was only 20 percent of normal. This matches the 2012 readings, making that year and 2013 the driest on record, according to the DWR.

Closer to home, 2013 was also the driest calendar year on record for Los Angeles, where only 3.6 inches of rain was recorded in the downtown/USC area (average annual rainfall in LA is about 15 inches). Pasadena is also experiencing very similar dry conditions. Scientists inform us that California and most of the West is heading into a third straight year of drought. JPL climatologist Bill Patzert recently told the Pasadena Star-News that he predicts continued dry weather for the state through June. Welcome to the brave new world of climate change in sunny (but very dry) California.

While Gov. Jerry Brown has not yet declared a drought emergency, last month the DWR formed a drought management team. State and municipal agencies across California are hoping for the best but preparing for the worst.

Among the preparations for the ongoing drought is the implementation of water conservation measures. Despite this common-sense policy step, our good governor is poised to sign off on regulations that will allow a massive expansion in the state of water-intensive hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, an oil extraction method that has proliferated in recent years.

The use of fracking around the country has caused a new boom in oil and natural gas production, and so it's become a juggernaut that many say is unstoppable. However, fracking not only uses huge amounts of water; it also contaminates the water with harmful chemicals, making it unsuitable for any other purposes. The waste water from fracking can also pollute surface ground water sources and shallow aquifers tapped for drinking water.

The waste water recovered from fracking is usually so polluted that it is routinely re-injected deep in the Earth, where it is essentially lost forever. Furthermore, scientific studies have recently shown that this re-injection process can cause earthquakes in regions that are usually seismically inactive. The last thing California needs is a human activity that can increase the risk of earthquakes.

Of course, when the fossil fuels (oil and natural gas) derived from fracking are burned, more carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) is released into the atmosphere, and this will only accelerate global warming and climate change. To the extent our current drought is the result of climate change, we will just be making the situation worse. Gov. Brown simultaneously calling climate change "the world's greatest existential challenge" and then allowing the expansion of fracking in California is a total contradiction.

As time goes by, more problems associated with fracking are becoming evident. Serious air pollution is one of them. Residents near downtown Los Angeles and USC have suffered from respiratory ailments, headaches and nose bleeds since 2010 after Allenco Energy Co. ramped up production at old oil wells in the area more than fourfold by using fracking and acidification techniques. The situation became so bad that last November federal environmental officers were sickened by toxic vapors

as they toured the South LA urban oilfield in question, according to reports in the Los Angeles Times.

At the urging of US Sen. Barbara Boxer and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Allenco voluntarily suspended operations on Nov. 22 and promised to make repairs and modify its operations to mitigate the serious air pollution stemming from its fracking operations. However, the LA County Department of Health, according to the Times, has expressed doubt the modification plans will succeed and has called for a comprehensive audit of the facility.

The horror stories don't stop there. As a result of the oil production boom caused by fracking, railroads are now carrying 25 times more crude oil than they were just five years ago. More than 200,000 barrels per month were imported into California by rail this last summer, a fourfold increase since 2012, according to the Times.

However, moving oil by rail is only about half as safe as in pipelines, and this is reflected by the fact that in 2013 there were four serious accidents in North America involving trains carrying oil. In the worst incident, last July in Canada, a train with 72 tank cars derailed and plowed into a town, exploded, and killed more than 40 people.

The California oil industry wants to frack the Monterey Shale formation under the Central Valley, which contains an estimated 15 billion barrels of oil. How will this oil be moved around the state? You guessed it — by rail.

Ah, the joys of fracking: massive water consumption and contamination, more earthquakes, climate change, air pollution, oil train explosions, etc., etc. Fortunately, Democratic state Assemblyman Marc Levine of Sausalito has written a letter to Gov. Brown, urging him to declare a moratorium on fracking. Un-

fortunately, our local legislators, state Sen. Carol Liu and Assemblyman Chris Holden, have not yet co-signed Levine's letter. They should do so immediately.

What's more important to the human family, water or oil? I'd choose water any day.

John Gula, PhD, is affiliated with the Southern California Federation of Scientists.



Wanted!

Vacation photos of you... Please send your high-resolution pics to Chuck at Hains27@SBCGlobal.net. (Note that he does not require that you take a copy of our publication around the world or on the trail with you.) ☺



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Calendar

- February 20 Thursday 7 p.m. ACT Issues Committee dinner meeting at the Fuhrman/Kane home, 3220 E. Sierra Madre Blvd., Pasadena. Interested members welcome. Contact Susan Kane or Ralph Hurtado at skane1@charter.net or rhurtado799@charter.net for information.
- February 21 Friday 9 a.m. Progressive Discussion Group with Stella Murga of Pasadena Latino Coalition at CoCo's Restaurant, 77 N. Lake Avenue, Pasadena. Call Inman Moore for info at 626-795-2201.
- March 6 Thursday 7 p.m. ACT Steering Committee/ADC meeting at the home of Bobbie & Henry Moon, 1961 Mar Vista Ave., Altadena. Guest speaker: Rachel Torres of the Hotel Workers' Union. Coffee at 7 p.m.; meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- Mar 7 & 21 Friday Friday Morning Discussion Group. (Details same as 2/21.)
- March 9 Sunday eve. Phoenix deadline. Send items to Hains27@SBCGlobal.net
- March 14 Friday 10 a.m. San Gabriel Valley Democratic Women's Club meeting. Speaker: Anthony Portantino. The meeting will be at 10 am at Sara Carnahan's, 2525 Highland Ave., Alta. Everyone welcome.
- March 25 Tuesday 7 p.m. Forum on "Increased Civilian Oversight of Pasadena PD" at the Pasadena Public Library.