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2018 California Democratic Convention Perspectives

By Tim Wendler, continuous delegate since 1989

My first reaction was that the delegates felt united. The 2017 convention was dominated by an intensely competitive battle (tiny 57 vote margin of 3,000 votes cast) to elect the state party chair. That election became a proxy-battle between the old guard/Clinton supporters and the new energy/Sanders supporters. This year, despite the largest number of spirited, state-wide endorsement competitions in my memory, the usual cajoling was respectful, not shouting matches. Chair Eric Bauman encouraged the mood by an egalitarian sharing of the session leadership by the various officers and leaders of the party during the two-day convention.

The major winner in the statewide endorsements was 'No Consensus.' Party endorsement requires 60% approval with the goal of avoiding divisive endorsements with bare majorities. The vote that received the most national attention was Calif. Senate Pro Tem Kevin de Leon's denial of incumbent Senator Feinstein's endorsement (54%-37%). This reflected de Leon's significantly greater efforts in courting delegates and his left of center stated ideology, contrasting with Feinstein's history of seeking results through compromise. While this gives de Leon a much-needed boost in his uphill campaign, it may be that he needed to obtain endorsement-level support to truly effect the dynamics of the race, long-term.



Joanne & Tim Wendler at convention

In the Governor's race, four Democrats, Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom (39%), Treasurer John Chiang (30%), former Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin (20%), and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (9%) vied unsuccessfully for the endorsement. That said, the results have to be considered a strong victory for Chiang, who is known as an accessible, pragmatic, and effective public servant. Given his leads in polling and fundraising, Newsom planned in the weeks leading up to the convention to dominate and score the endorsement. It was a particularly poor result for Villaraigosa and reflected his poor relationship with Labor and some post-mayoral coziness with business and charter school efforts that are not supported by most party members.

Convention, *continued*

A few other endorsement results of note included:

- Lt Governor – virtual tie between Senator Ed Hernandez (42%) and former Ambassador Elen Kounalakis (41%) – I would consider this a positive for Hernandez given the amount of energy Kounalakis put into the convention.
- Attorney General – Dave Jones (56%), Xavier Becerra (42%). Becerra's goal as the incumbent was to keep the party neutral despite Jones heavy efforts to sway the delegates.
- Party endorsements included Betty Yee for reelection as Controller, Ricardo Lara for Insurance Commissioner, Alex Padilla for reelection as Secretary of State, Tony Thurmond for Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Fiona Ma as State Treasurer.

We left the San Diego convention ready to take back the House (maybe even the Senate) and set us on a path to reclaiming the White House for the American people in 2020.

— Tim Wendler



Flipping the 39th

As you know, ACT and ADC have joined with Swing Left in the campaign to turn the 39th Congressional District from Republican to Democrat. We rejoiced when 39th CD incumbent Republican Ed Royce announced he would retire. But that is just part of the battle. We have some hard work to do to turn the 39th BLUE.

Sign up on Swing Left's calendar via ACT's webpage, ACTpasadena.org. Your help is urgently needed. Please volunteer today.

Swing Left will provide materials and training so you can go out with a partner to talk to targeted households. Bring water, comfortable

shoes and a fully charged smartphone. (If you don't have a smartphone you will be partnered with someone who does have one.)

Note: ADC President Bill Hackett may be able to facilitate ride-sharing. Call him at 626 705-2180 or msg him at billhackett2002@yahoo.com.

P.S. Swing Left is an online network that helps people find their closest Swing District in Congress and connects them with actionable volunteer opportunities to support progressive candidates in that District. The goal is simple: flip the House in the 2018 midterm elections and put a check on the Trump agenda. Sign up and learn more at SwingLeft.org.



April Meeting

Thursday, April 5, 7 p.m./7:30 p.m.
at the home of

Marilee Marshall and Bruce Wright
654 S. Madison Avenue, Pasadena

Program: **The Research Committee** reports on its interviews and endorsement recommendations for June 5 Election races and ballot measures, including L A County (Sheriff, Assessor, Supervisor District 1) some statewide and federal races, and PCC Trustee races. The Steering Committee will receive the report and make its endorsement recommendations. A ballot for ACT and ADC members will then be placed in the April *Phoenix* for members to vote ACT's and ADC's endorsements.

Socializing is at 7 p.m., with the meeting following at 7:30 p.m. Please come. All members are welcome.



Special Thanks to Sustaining Members

Sally Beer, Altadena

Elizabeth Calleton, Pasadena

Norman Thomas & Mae Gautier, Pasa.

Wonderings and Wanderings

By Inman Moore

Women's National History Month



We are now into the early days of March which is National Women's History Month. It has been so designated since 1987 when Congress so declared it. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American Women. This proclamation is well intentioned and well needed. For America is still not anywhere near fully accepting women into all phases of American life.

For example the Roman Catholic Church still will not ordain women as priests. Many of the major Protestant denoms have only in recent years started to ordain women as ministers.

Oftentimes when we list prominent Americans it is a list of men. We fail to list the prominent women and there have been many. So let's list a few of them.

Abigail Adams (1744-1818) — Wrote lucidly about her life and time and exerted great influence over her famous husband President John Adams.

Phyllis Wheatley (1753-1784) — The first significant black poet in America.

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) — A tireless campaigner for gender equality.

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) — A "conductor" on the Underground Railway. She led more than 300 slaves to freedom.

Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) — Writer.

Ellen Swallow Richards (1842-1911) — First woman to enroll at MIT. Founded science of home economics.

Carry (sometimes spelled Carrie) A. Nation (1846-1911) — Temperance.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) — Social Reform.

Grandma Moses (1860-1961) — Folk Art.

Nellie Bly (1864-1922) — Social Justice.

Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) — Social Reform.

Helen Keller (1880-1968) — Social Reform.

Jeannette Rankin (1880-1973) — First woman elected to Congress.

There are many more women today in the area of social reform and politics. I am simply trying to demonstrate that women have always been in the picture and are even more so today. And so they should be! Here are three cheers for the female of the human race. May women thrive and do well in the days and months to come. We need men and women together striving for the betterment of the human race.

I conclude by reminding you that Senator Dianne Feinstein is a woman with great seniority. It would be a shame to lose it at this crucial time. No matter whom her opponents are we would do well to reelect her.

— Inman



Research Committee Schedule

The Research Committee will meet on the last two Saturdays in March, March 24 and March 31, to consider four state ballot measures, County wide offices (Sheriff and Assessor), Superior Court judges, four PCC Trustee races: Areas 1 (Ross Selvidge, incumbent), 3 (Berlinda Brown) 5 (Linda Wah), and 7 (Anthony Fellow.) Research Committee recommendations will be reported at the April Steering Committee/ADC meeting.

Chair Marilee Marshall asks ACT and ADC members to submit suggested questions for candidates for the various offices to her at mmlegal@sbcglobal.net.



Special thanks to Benefactors

Councilmember Steve Madison

Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Friday, February 16.

We're off on another vacation, so I'm writing this column about three weeks earlier than normal. I won't even try to predict what might happen by the time we get back in mid-March. Will Gen. John Kelly still be Chief of Staff? My guess – 60/40 he'll stay. Will the President fire Special Counsel Robert Mueller? I'd say 80/20 Mueller will still be grinding away. Will we get closer to a compromise on the Dreamers? All the proposals failed in the Senate yesterday, needing at least 3 more GOP votes (3 Dems voted no, but if their votes would have put the measure over the top, they might have reconsidered). I think we should consider giving the President his \$25 billion for "border security" (aka the Wall) but stretch it out over 5 to 10 years, giving future Congresses and Presidents plenty of time to pull the plug, if, in exchange, we could get a path toward citizenship for the Dreamers, even if it

takes as long as 10 years. But any compromise would also have to get through the House, which will be a tough slog. Also, there is some evidence that the White House thinks, politically, they need the immigration issue to be aflame, so they really don't want any compromise that might damp down the emotion in the base.

On the other hand, the House GOP wing might start to see the value in compromise, especially after March 13th – the special election in Pennsylvania's 18th CD. This has always been a rock-solid GOP district, but I think Democrat Conor Lamb has a real chance to pull an upset. Latest polling shows a gap of just a couple of points, well within the margin of error. Special elections are particularly vulnerable to swings in enthusiasm that can skew turnout.

Some evidence for that comes from two recent state legislative special elections where Democrats captured previously Republican districts. One was back in January in western Wisconsin, where Democrats flipped a State Senate seat, winning 54 – 46, when the President had won by 17 points in 2016. The second election was three days ago when Florida voters chose Democrat Margaret Good by 52% - 45% over GOP'er James Buchanan. This was particularly notable not just because President Trump carried the district by 51% - 46%, but also because Buchanan's father, incumbent Congressman Vern Buchanan, has represented the area for 12 years. That's a lot of name recognition and political power to overcome, and former Trump campaign managers Cory Lewandowski and David Bossie had come down to the district to campaign and fundraise for Buchanan Junior. But their efforts were for naught as voters shredded another safe GOP seat in a district with 13,000 more registered Republicans than Dems.

The campaign managers for these two Democratic candidates drew somewhat different,

but somewhat similar, lessons from their campaigns. In Wisconsin, Democrat Patty Schachtner did not run outside the party on guns, choice or immigration, even in a relatively conservative, rural district. She did say that she and her family were hunters, that they owned guns, but she did not kowtow to the NRA. She focused on two national issues – health care and taxes – and one local issue – skills training – and she didn't even mention President Trump (though the President's conduct was ever present in the background). Interestingly, their campaign used the same message on turnout targets (Democrats) and persuasion targets (Reps, independents, and conservative Dems). They believed both turnout efforts and persuasion efforts mattered, in equal proportion – so you can't just focus on winning GOP women, or just on turning out our base; you have to do both. And their conclusion was that Democrats should be more aggressive in targeting districts, meaning we can indeed win relatively conservative areas without giving up our souls.



In Florida, Democratic campaign manager Steve Schale (who directed President Obama's Florida campaigns) argues that Democratic women, and women in general, drove turnout in their special election. Although Democratic women made up only 19% of registered voters, they made up 26% of the early voters. And while overall turnout was 21% for early voting, among Democratic women it was 30%. So the enthusiasm of women, and particularly Democratic women, can be decisive in these low-turnout special elections. Further, in this particular district in Florida, it wasn't younger voters or minority voters who drove turnout. Among the early voters (which was a substantial proportion of the total vote), 94%

were white and 90% were over 50, so clearly we were also winning voters who had voted for Romney, for Trump and for Republicans generically. His estimate was that, after all the votes are tallied, 2,000 more Republicans will have cast ballots than Democrats; clearly we successfully ate into the more mainstream GOP elements of the electorate.

Here in California, voter registration data for 2017 showed over 1.8 million registrations were processed, more than double the average for the past three gubernatorial cycles. Surprisingly, it's nearly double the number processed in 2015, the year prior to the last Presidential election.

This is just another indicator of an increasingly engaged electorate, which typically is bad news for Republicans. For decades, they have relied on lower turnouts in "off-years" to boost their margins and win races in purple or even blue states and districts.

So keep an eye on the Pennsylvania special election on March 13th and the Arizona special election on April 24 (with a primary on Feb. 27, in which a hard-core

Trump supporter is vying for the GOP nomination). If Democrats can flip one, or even both, of these seats, you may start to see quiet panic in the GOP caucus as they reevaluate their political calculus and start to realize that actually enacting legislative solutions may be a prerequisite for survival.

Sacramento had some unusually good news (among all the depressing news about personal misconduct by various legislators, staff and lobbyists) this week from State Controller Betty Yee. The State took in dramatically more cash than expected in January – beating the Governor's estimates by \$2.3 billion. Nearly all of that excess came from PIT – personal

income taxes. That includes regular withholding from salary checks and also the last payment of estimated taxes due for the 2017 year. It's always hard to tell how much of that excess is due to capital gains, which are highly volatile (the market had a great year in 2017, a great January, but February was pretty brutal), as opposed to regular withholding, which is steady and likely to continue for the rest of this budget year and the next budget year.

But this year, savvy investors and tax payers were likely to pre-pay their estimated taxes for 2017 in December, when they could fully deduct those state taxes from their federal taxes, versus waiting until 2018, when under the new federal tax reform rules only a total \$10,000 of state income taxes and property taxes, combined, could be deducted. So this deluge of cash in January, 2018 is likely to be mostly from withholding, consistent with the strong economic growth and jobs growth, and continued low levels of unemployment claims.

If that is true, and if this trend holds for a few more months, the Governor will have the happy task both of allocating a substantially increased amount of funds back to schools and localities for the 2017 – 2018 budget year, as well as adjusting upwards the income estimates for the 2018 – 2019 budget. The Governor is likely to want even more resources to be spent on paying down debt and funding our rainy day reserves, which are emphatically good things to do. But there should also be a substantial amount of funds available for schools for one-time spending (new 2017 – 2018 funds) as well as increases in the 2018 – 2019 funding. The peculiarities of the Prop. 98 budget rules will moderate the increase to school funding; schools are already nearly “fully funded” under even the most generous of the Prop. 98 rules, but there should be significant additional funds available for other state-funded activities.

Another option the Governor might explore is an increased contribution to CALPERS and CALSTRS, the pension funds for state and local employees and teachers. As the Boards of these agencies have been adjusting downward – to more realistic levels – the anticipated returns of these mammoth investment funds, and adjusting upward the anticipated payouts (as retirees age longer and need more money for medical support), the pension liability grows, and the funds have been assessing cities and counties and school districts higher and higher levels to try to close that liability. The last year or two of dramatic market growth has certainly helped, but it has not closed the gap. The Governor could propose some additional one-time contributions to the funds, from the state surplus, that would lessen the burden on local agencies, but Gov. Brown has typically been pretty stingy with state funds, so I'm not sure how likely that is (despite the enormous pressure these increased assessments are putting on local city and school budgets).

The other interesting facet here is that the State Supreme Court will be considering a case this year on pensions. A prior Supreme Court decision interpreted pensions as property rights, something that, once given, can never be taken back or reduced. Certainly, for years already worked, employees deserve the pension promised at the time. But can a city or school district reduce the pension rate for existing employees for future years? If so, cities and schools could dramatically reduce potential pension liabilities simply by going back to pension rates in effect before 2004. In that year, the Legislature increased the rate of pension earnings and reduced the age at which employees could begin drawing their pension.

My guess is that the Supreme Court will re-interpret the State Constitution and pension laws and allow the Legislature, and local

entities, to change (reduce) the terms under which pensions can be earned by existing employees for future years. So for example, if an employee worked for 5 years before 2004, that person earned a pension of 2.25% of salary for each year worked. After 2004, they earned a pension of 2.75% of salary for each year worked. Can the state or a local entity now say that, from 2019 onward, the person earns only 2.25% of salary for each additional year worked? My guess is that Court will say yes, that is permissible. If they do, then that will open a huge war between public sector unions and legislators. The current rates are just too high; they will, and are already, cripple local governments. But for public employees, this is the ultimate pocket-book issue. When (and if) the Court rules that pensions can be changed prospectively, look for a no-holds-barred fight over the issue, and probably several ballot initiatives from each side.

— Jon Fuhrman



The Equitable Housing Charter Amendment

Pasadena Tenants Union (PTU) officially notified City Officials on Wednesday, November 15th of a ballot initiative — **“The Pasadena Fair and Equitable Housing Charter Amendment.”** Why? To bring “rent control” and “just cause” to Pasadena.

Currently PTU members are gathering signatures from Pasadena voters to ensure the initiative will be on the ballot at the next General Municipal Election on November 6, 2018.

Why is this ballot initiative so important? Because the City of Pasadena is in a *housing crisis*.

- The average rent for a one-bedroom unit in Pasadena has risen 51.7% in the last six years.

- Tenants are receiving rental increases of \$200, \$800 and more a month, multiple times a year and are at risk of being evicted for no cause.
- How many seniors, families, teachers and nurses are gone due to Pasadena’s rental-housing crisis?

Nicole Marie Hodgson, member of the PTU and one of three proponents who signed the initiative, says, “57.1% of Pasadena residents are renters, and yet we have no housing security in the City. Rent control ensures that rent increases are reasonable and occur only once a year, while providing landlords with economic security by guaranteeing them fair returns on their investments.”



A landlord sets the initial rent and the rent board determines the % of rent increases every year based on CPI (Consumer Price Index). Rent increases will never exceed a 4.5% increase.

John Grula, PTU Member, describes the problem, “While the paucity of affordable housing is often linked to a shortage of development, the real problem, at least in Pasadena, is the kind of development that is occurring. How many of our residents can afford to rent units in new luxury expensive developments? The answer is very few. Thus, we have a shortage of affordable housing in Pasadena” and are at risk of losing our housing stock of long term rental units due to no rental protections.

“The opposition argument is that we should just allow the markets to work to solve the affordable housing crisis” Grula responds, “But this crisis has occurred under the current system. The markets are clearly not working, and that’s why we are in trouble.”

Join Pasadena Tenants Union to fight for our neighbors, our community and our city. We have a General Meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the Month at Throop Church, 300 S. Los

Robles Ave. Come join the conversation on Pasadena Fair & Equitable Housing.

Pasadena Tenants Union (PTU) is a grassroots movement founded in November 2016 by tenants and homeowners. We are a membership body of volunteers and have no paid staff. *PTU* was born due to the growing pressure on tenants in the City.

Nicole Marie Hodgson, PTU, 626 491-1044
info@pasadenatenantsunion.com
www.pasadenatenantsunion.com/



Postcard Parties Deliver Votes

ACT members and friends are collaborating with Tony the Democrat and Swing Left San Gabriel Valley to get out the vote locally and in states with critical elections pending. More than 800 postcards were written by 30+ of us, and three additional postcard parties have been spawned. Strong postcard campaigns contributed to Democrat victories in Virginia and Alabama. Nationwide 300,000 handwritten postcards have been sent to Democrats and undeclared voters in the Pittsburgh area, urging them to vote for Democratic candidate Conor Lamb for US Congress. That special election will be held March 13. In another Congressional race, in greater Chicago, Marie Newman is pitted against an incumbent Democrat who has sided with President Trump on key issues.

In addition, a handful of us recently registered Democrats and “declined to state” individuals after a naturalization ceremony at Pasadena’s civic auditorium.

Join us as progressives take aim at more targets. Call me at 797-4966 and I will help match you up with a weekly postcard party.

— Linda Centell

Upcoming Meetings – Advanced Notice

May 3: Proposed Split Roll Initiative:

Guest speaker for our May meeting will be Debbie Fagen, Legislative Coordinator for the Pasadena Chapter of the League of Women Voters. Her topic will be the potential November initiative that will substantially change how Proposition 13 operates. Prop. 13, passed in 1978, severely limits property taxes. The only time property is reassessed for tax purposes, with some exceptions, is when it passes from one owner to another. Business however gets around said reassessment because when corporations and certain other forms of business change hands the buildings and land are still owned by the corporation. For that reason business taxes due to inflation are not carrying their weight. This mostly adversely affects public education 1 through 12 and Community Colleges. The proposed initiative would call for a split roll reassessing business property but not RESIDENTIAL.

In order to qualify this initiative backers need 585,407 qualified signatures within a 180 day period beginning approximately March 1. (To be certain that enough of the signatures are qualified the goal is to collect one million signatures.) Even if it makes it to the ballot it figures to be a hard slog to the finish line as opponents (business) figure to spend many, many millions of dollars to defeat it.

NOTE: Please consider volunteering to collect signatures or contributing funds for professionals to collect them. — Ron Garber

June 7: June 5 Election Results Discussion



Special Thanks to Patrons

William Tully, Pasadena

**From
25th District
State Senator
Anthony
Portantino**



Dear ACT members,

It's another month with much more to share. Recently, I joined several of my State Senate colleagues in unveiling a Senate proposal to increase the base funding level in the Local Control Funding Formula for K-12 schools by \$1.2 billion. I believe this is the first fundable and reasonable approach to increasing LCFF that has a chance of making it into the final budget since LCFF was first enacted. Although LCFF this year will be "fully funded" no one believes that our schools are getting what they really need for our students to thrive. The Senate proposal is a way to increase the base this year and in the future years by an additional 2% for each district. For Pasadena Unified, this would be an increase of about \$3.3 million annually. Is this what the PUSD needs or deserves, no, but will it help, yes. I also participated in a Joint Senate and Assembly Education hearing on Special Education Funding. Again, this is an area where the PUSD does not receive the necessary funds it needs to adequately educate its special-ed population which is inordinately high. Glendale would receive about \$4.6 million, La Canada \$686,000 and South Pasadena roughly \$810,000 extra under the Senate proposal.

I was also very happy to introduce a bill to add the Arroyo Seco Tributary into the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributary Working Group planning process. A big thank you goes to Tim Brick from the Arroyo Seco Foundation for highlighting last year's omission of our own

important tributary from this working group. I've said it many times that activists make us do our job better and Tim's advocacy of the Arroyo Seco, asking the legislature to correct an oversight, is making a difference. Representatives from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), shepherding the working group, believe the Bill is helping to bring the issue into its appropriate focus and importance. It helps to have Tim on the ground pushing for an administrative solution and the Bill in the process to force the outcome we all want.

I don't know how any parent or citizen isn't emotionally affected by the young activists in Florida demanding action from Washington on gun control. I know it's deeply affected me. I introduced amendments this week to SB 1100 that would raise the age for long gun purchases in California from 18 to 21. It's something that should be done on the national level but if Washington isn't going to ACT than California will. The bill also prohibits more than one firearm purchase in a 30-day period.

The 2018 Democratic Convention was quite fun. I was happy to host delegates from the 25th Senate District for lunch and to see some terrific Democratic candidates in action. Locally, I've put my support behind Sandra Chen Lau for PCC Board. I hope you will join me supporting her, too. She's a great candidate!

On the family front, Bella continues to work on her Gold Award Project which will help foster youth. Sofia is busy in New York working on a movie and Ellen continues to be everywhere helping all of us. I'm a blessed man.

Warmly,

— Anthony

Capitol Office Glendale District Office
(916) 651-4025 (818) 409-0400

**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

It is been a busy month both in Sacramento and the District. I introduced my legislative package for the year and look forward to keeping you up to date. We recently held a successful public safety panel discussion in Monrovia, and on Thursday March 15th we will be honoring the District's Women of Distinction at my Annual Spring District Office Open House, 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

I'm proud to introduce legislation, Assembly Bill 2370, to help protect children from lead poisoning. Lead poisoning is a serious threat to children's health and increasing lead testing for California's high-risk children is one of the single biggest steps we can take to prevent lead poisoning. Very young children absorb about 40 to 50 percent of the ingested lead when drinking contaminated water, while adults absorb between 5-15 percent. Almost three-fourths of California's high-risk children -- 1- and 2-year-olds enrolled in the state-run low-income health insurance program -- had not been tested for lead in their blood. AB 2370 expands lead testing in drinking water within child care centers, encourages greater lead testing of high-risk children, and informs parents about the risks and effects of lead exposure.

In Monrovia, I hosted a public safety panel discussion focused on Propositions 47 and 57, and Assembly Bill 109 -- the Public Safety Realignment Act. The purpose was to bring together subject matter experts in public safety, probation and reintegration to provide up to date information on these ballot initiatives and to answer questions from the community.

Our panelists included Flintridge Center Reintegration specialist Daniel Torres, Los Angeles County Probation Deputy Chief Reaver Bingham, and Los Angeles County Police Chief's Association President Robert Guthrie.

We succeeded in having a productive conversation around these initiatives, what the state is doing to implementing them, how local governments are addressing the issues, and what we can do to ensure that second chances are provided without risking our quality of life. I plan to support successful programs that incentivize rehabilitation and county participation, just as Flintridge Center has done right here in Pasadena. If you missed the event, you can watch it on my Facebook page.

I invite you to join me at my Annual Spring District Office Open House on Thursday, March 15, 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. to celebrate Women's History Month and recognize a woman of distinction from each city in the 41st Assembly District. The women will be honored for their service and work that has made a positive impact in their community. Please RSVP Assemblymember.Holden@Assembly.ca.gov.

Lastly, I want to welcome you to meet my new District Director Catherine Del Rosario who is taking the reins from Phlunte' Riddle. As you know, Phlunte's leadership and expertise made a positive impact to my district office that will be permanent. Now, I'm looking forward to working with her as my Political Director. Catherine served as my Senior Legislative Aide from 2012 to 2016. In 2016, Del Rosario pursued her passion to equip and empower others by moving to Sydney, Australia to attend Hillsong International Leadership College, where she received training in leadership alongside leaders from over 60 countries. I'm excited to welcome to her back as District Director and hope you have the opportunity to meet her.

Sincerely,

— Chris R. Holden

Reconfiguration of Traffic Lanes on Orange Grove Between Lake and Sierra Madre Blvd.

Pasadena's Department of Transportation has developed a plan to put Orange Grove Boulevard, between Lake and Sierra Madre, on a "road diet"--to reduce the traffic from four to two lanes while adding left turn lanes and a buffered bike lane in each direction.

Residents of the area are outraged by this proposal. In one week, 29 pages of comments were posted on NextDoor NE Pasadena, about 85% opposing the plan. Emails to Mayor Tornek and Councilmember Masuda as well as to members of the Public Safety Committee: Councilmembers Hampton, Kennedy, and Madison appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Many neighbors have little confidence that their voices will be heard after their opposition to the bizarre reconfiguration of Sierra Madre Villa Ave. between W. Foothill and Orange Grove was ignored.

In Los Angeles road diets have been disasters. According to the *LA Times*, controversy over a road diet on Playa del Rey led to a restoration of the original car lanes. "Faced with an on-going furor over traffic congestion and so-called 'road diets,' Los Angeles officials announced they will restore car lanes removed from two Playa del Rey boulevards earlier this year." There is an active campaign to restore the traffic lanes removed on Venice Blvd. See <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2017/11/16/great-streets-road-diet-destroyed-my-life-and-ruined-my-family-says-mar-vista-restaurateur/>.

In South Pasadena there is an on-going controversy about a comparable project to reconfigure Monterey Road. According to the *South Pasadena Review*, the controversy included "numerous concerned residents, including some who felt the input of 2012 and 2015 volunteer committees that advised against a

road diet on Monterey Road was ignored by City staff." <https://southpasadenareview.com/?p=826>

Public hearings on this project have been scheduled for March 22 from 6:30 to 8:00 in the Jack Scott Room at PCC's Community Education Center on Foothill Blvd. and on March 28th from 6:00 to 8:30 in the Marshall Fundamental School Library.

— Jeanette Mann



Time to Fire Up Membership/Outreach Efforts

In today's political climate, there is this sense of urgency to "do something" and to harness the energy of progressives. In response to this, ACT has formed a new Membership/Outreach Committee. Our goal is to assist members to get involved with ACT and the election process while making us more visible in the political and community arenas.

Actions that we have identified as relevant:

- How do we make new members feel more welcome at our meetings?
- How can ACT better serve as ambassadors to other organizations such as Swing Left San Gabriel Valley?
- How do we fire up new members who, in turn, will fire up newly registered voters?

Additional activities to focus on: social media, mentorships, letters to the editor and city commission service.

Our Committee is looking for additional volunteers who recognize the good services ACT provides for the community and want to become a part of this movement. We would also welcome any ideas and input you might have. We will soon be hosting a meeting. Please, contact Barbara Paul to sign up and join us seasideatdelmar@gmail.com.

— Barbara Paul

Letter to the Editor

This missive is going to sound defensive but I assure that it's not. In January's meeting while touting the program to 'Get Out the Vote' by sending out post cards in current special elections I mentioned that the Republicans had erroneously labeled Conor Lamb the Democrat running for Congress in Pennsylvania's 18th district as a disciple of Nancy Pelosi. I pointed out the Republican mistake as candidate Lamb does not support Pelosi to retain the leadership of the party in the House or to regain the Speakership. Upon hearing that, the room literally erupted with "HE DOESN'T SUPPORT PELOSI?" And all of the anger was coming from ACT women not the men. I didn't realize the anguish such a declaration, from a legitimately Progressive candidate, would cause. Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton are two of my all time favorite Democrats but they have both been around so long that the opposing party has been able to define them in the minds of their members to the point of apoplexy which helps them to rally their voters to show up at the polls.

If by 2020 the Speaker should be a Democratic Female, the Senate Majority Leader also a Democratic Female and both the Democratic Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates women I would be thrilled, only not Pelosi, who apparently wants to stay on or Clinton, who I believe has no intention of running again. You see politicians have a shelf life and don't tell me that I'm being sexist because it applies to both women and men and the very best candidates are those who are freshly on the scene like Barack Obama was in 2008 and like Kamala Harris might very well be in 2020. I seriously believe that Nancy Pelosi, who has my undying admiration should consider announcing that she would not be a candidate for Speaker when we retake the House in November.

— Ron Garber

Pasadena Tenants Union takes up the fight for affordable housing

by [John Grula](#), reprinted from the Pasadena Weekly with permission

The high cost of rents in Southern California is really getting out of hand. The cost of a one-bedroom apartment in the LA region ballooned by 15.6 percent last year, and this boosted the median monthly rent to \$2,300. The LA area, according to recent news reports, now ranks fifth highest in the nation in terms of the cost of rental units.



Here in Pasadena, things can get even worse. For example, The Hudson Apartments at Walnut Street and El Molino Avenue are going for \$3,890 per month for a one-bedroom unit. This is outrageous. How many of our residents can afford this? Not many.

About 57 percent of Pasadena residents are renters, while 43 percent are homeowner occupied, according to a 2012-2016 American Community Survey. The high cost of rents and subsequent evictions in the LA area are causing crises and directly related to our acute homeless problem.

More than half of all the renter households in California pay more than 30 percent of their household incomes on housing. Even worse, nearly a third pays more than half of their incomes on housing. These are the people who are teetering on the edge of homelessness and, to a large extent, this explains why our homeless problem is so severe.

While the paucity of affordable housing is often linked to a shortage of development, the real problem, at least in Pasadena, is the kind of development that is occurring. The Hudson Apartments are just one example of unaffordable housing. Greedy developers only seem to want to build "luxury apartments" and "spacious townhomes" to maximize their profits. To

see recent examples, just view the mega-developments next to Vroman's Bookstore and at the intersection of Walnut Street and Allen Avenue. Again, how many of our residents can afford to rent units in these huge and expensive developments? The answer is very few. Thus, we have a shortage of affordable housing in Pasadena.

And despite all the complaints from critics about high taxes, "oppressive" regulations and bureaucratic red tape in California, these developments nevertheless got built. How do we explain this? Having scads of money and friends in high places? Surely these things can't hurt.

Some argue that we should just allow the markets to work to solve the affordable housing crisis. But this crisis has occurred under the current system, which is market-driven. The markets are clearly not working, and that's why we are in trouble.

If the markets are not working, then it's time for government to step up to the plate. Unfortunately, Pasadena's Mayor and City Council have shown little willingness to do this. They should think twice and reconsider the well-being of the large majority of their constituents — the renters. To what extent does their cavalier indifference to the plight of renters stem from the fact that they are real estate owners?

One solution to the affordable housing crisis is some form of rent control, which has been adopted in a few places such as San Francisco, New York City and Los Angeles. Even critics of rent control admit that in San Francisco, "most renters benefit" from rent control, according to one report in the local newspaper. That's a lot of people, and many of them are older people. Rent-controlled tenants age 40 or more enjoyed a total average savings over time of almost \$120,000, the Pasadena Star-News recently reported. Sounds like good policy to me.

Various arguments against rent control, like it causes landlords to lose money, or that it stops development, or that it causes apartment units to fall into disrepair, are sweeping and unfounded generalizations that are of dubious validity.

Fortunately for Pasadena, we have a new grassroots group, the Pasadena Tenants Union (PTU), which is working to qualify a charter amendment for the voters to judge on the November ballot. This charter amendment would authorize a form of limited rent control that is pegged to the rate of inflation and includes "just cause" language that would stipulate landlords must have legitimate reasons to evict tenants.

The PTU deserves your support. Please sign the petition it is currently circulating at multiple locations.

For more: info@pasadenatenantsunion.com.

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



Letter to the Editor

Celebrity justice: R.B.G. edition

I have mixed emotions about Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I'm a Liberal (no longer a dirty word) (note the capital L) who naturally agrees with virtually all the votes she's taken on the high court, but she is in her 80's and a cancer survivor who had the opportunity to retire with a Democratic President in office and chose not to. To my mind if she survives until January 20, 2021 she's a hero but if she doesn't last on the bench for whatever reason and Trump gets to replace her she's not my hero. Unless by some miracle next January Schumer becomes the majority leader it won't matter as he will be able to invoke the McConnell rule and block a Trump appointment by

saying that we have to leave it to the voters to decide in 2020.

— Ron Garber



Check ACT's Webpage

Bruce Wright, our website manager, has put some important items on our website:

- 1) The list of California Democratic Party 2018 endorsements - from the Convention
- 2) California Target Book's analysis of key southern California races, and
- 3) Swing Left's Calendar for the 39th CD.

Check our webpage, www.ACTpasadena.org for this easy access news!

You will also find the current on-line edition of *The Phoenix* (in color and often with items that couldn't be fitted into the print edition).

As always, Bruce wants your ideas and photos at brucewright@sbcglobal.net.



“Participate Pasadena” Panel Discussion

Pasadena Heritage will host an exciting panel discussion on the topics of Mansionization and Specific Plans on Wednesday, March 14, from 6 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. in the Skyroom at Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena. This is the second in a series of meetings called “Participate Pasadena.” Admission to this fun, informative event is free. There will be plenty of free parking, coffee and cookies. Come learn about these important topics. R.S.V.P. to billhackett2002@yahoo.com.



Progressive Discussion Group

PDG meets every first and third Friday of the month from 9-10 a.m. in the back room of

Dupar's Restaurant, 214 S. Lake Avenue, Pasadena. Park in the lot behind the restaurant off Shopper's Lane.

Everyone is welcome. Order breakfast, coffee, etc., or not. (If you plan to order breakfast, please arrive a bit early.) Contact Dale Gronemeier dlg@dgronemeier.com for details.



The Phoenix Editorial Policy:

Signed articles and letters appearing in the Phoenix represent the opinions of the individual writers and not of ACT. Their appearance does not imply endorsement by ACT or agreement with the opinions expressed. The accuracy of facts is not guaranteed. We welcome articles of interest and encourage members to write.



Where Have You Been?

Whether you have been near or far, vacationing or otherwise, please send a high resolution photo (of you) to Chuck and Sally at hains27@sbcglobal.net for inclusion in *The Phoenix*.



Time to Renew - 2018

It's time to renew your annual membership in ACT and/or the Arroyo Democratic Club. Please respond to the membership appeal letter that you recently received; use the form below to send in your membership; or join or renew on line at www.actpasadena.org.

However you do it, we deeply appreciate your continued support as we fight for progressive ideals in the Foothills area. And thanks to those who have renewed already!

P.S. If you have any questions about your membership contact Jon Fuhrman at 626-864-5255 or at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com.



I'd like to join both groups for one low price! (Checks payable to ACT/ADC)

\$40 Single	\$70 Single Sustaining
\$25 Each additional member per household	\$90 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$150 Patron
	\$275 Benefactor

I'd like to join ACT (Checks payable to ACT)

\$35 Single	\$60 Single Sustaining
\$20 Each additional member per household	\$85 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$125 Patron
\$20 Gift Membership (NEW!)	\$275 Benefactor

I'd like to join the Arroyo Democratic Club (Checks payable to ADC)

\$35 Single	\$60 Single Sustaining
\$20 Each additional member per household	\$85 Double Sustaining
\$15 Student or limited income	\$125 Patron
	\$275 Benefactor

Extra Contribution

\$ _____ Political Account (for endorsed candidates and issues)
 \$ _____ Operating Account (for organizational costs) \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

 Name

Home Phone

 Address

Office Phone

 City

ZIP

 Email address

Mail to ACT, P. O. Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074

Information provided will be available to other members and endorsed candidates upon request.



Calendar

- March 16
Friday
9-10 a.m. Progressive Discussion Group at Dupar's Restaurant, 214 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena. Dale Gronemeier for more info at dlg@dgronemeier.com. Also 4/6 and 4/20.
- March 19
Monday
7 p.m. UDH Steering Meeting at the home of Karen Wingard, 737 Magnolia, Pasadena.
- April 5
Thursday
7 p.m. ACT Steering and ADC Meeting at the home of Marilee Marshall and Bruce Wright, 654 S. Madison Ave., Pasadena. Research Committee report; endorsement recommendations. Socializing at 7 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
- April 8
Sunday p.m. Phoenix deadline.



April *Phoenix* Deadline

The deadline for the April *Phoenix* is Sunday evening, April 8. Please send items for publication on or before the deadline to Editor Chuck Hains at hains27@sbcglobal.net. Preparing *The Phoenix* for mailing will likely be on Thursday, April 12 at a location to be determined.



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