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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

Remembering Gloria Molina

Gloria Molina died May 14 following a three-year fight against cancer. Gloria was an ACT member since 1982, and (I think) was endorsed by ACT in her first run for the State Assembly. Pat Bond and Fred Register were her consultants for that run, and for all the future runs. I was her campaign treasurer from 1987 until the end of her Supervisorial career in 2014. She was ACT's only Life Member -- a deal Judy Boggs worked out in exchange for her sponsorship of one of our events in the 1990's.

Gloria's thirty-two-year political career has been a series of firsts that inspired generations of women and Latinos to seek public office — the first Latina Assembly member in California, the first Latina on the Los Angeles City Council, the first Latina on the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. She has had a tremendous impact on Southern California and, indeed, the whole state. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family and friends.



A portrait of Gloria Molina

~ Jon Fuhrman

California Democratic Party Endorsement Process



The State Democratic Party has a two-step process for endorsements in partisan races (i.e., Congress, Senate, Assembly). The first step involves a regional or pre-endorsing caucus, and then there are subsequent votes by delegates at the next Democratic convention in November. In the first local step, club representatives may vote in addition to the state delegates who live locally. The Arroyo Democratic Club has submitted our roster to the party to determine how many representatives we will receive. We will need to submit the names of our representatives by July eleven. Please let me know if you would like to be considered for this role, at timwendler89@gmail.com.

~ Tim Wendler, President, Arroyo Democratic Club (ADC)



Next ACT and ADC Meeting

Thursday, June 8, 7 p.m.
at the home of

Marilee Marshall & Bruce Wright



ACT's and the Arroyo Democratic Club's June meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 8 June, 7 p.m., at 654 S. Madison Avenue, Pasadena. The program will be a presentation by members of the newly-formed Pasadena Young Democrats Club. The club's webpage is PasadenaYD.org.

Everyone is welcome and is urged to come. Socializing begins at 7 p.m., with the program and business meeting following at 7:30 p.m.

Cheryl Brickey will be the presiding Chair for ACT; Tim Wendler for ADC.



Our Crazy Calendar



You probably remember that our ACT and ADC meetings are on the first Thursday of the month with the deadline for *Phoenix* copy on the following Monday. **Except for this year.** For various reasons, the dates are a bit different:

June – Meeting date, Thursday, June 8:

Phoenix deadline, Monday, June 12.

July – Meeting date, Thursday, July 20. This

is our Summer Potluck meeting with special guest speaker DA George Gascon.

And there will be **no July Phoenix**.

August – No Meeting; *Phoenix* deadline, Monday, August 14.

September – Meeting date, Thursday, September 7; *Phoenix* deadline, Monday, September 11.

September – ACT's 50th Anniversary

Fundraiser will be on a Sunday afternoon in September; whether the 10th or the 17th or the 24th to be determined.

Greetings from the UDH!

The UDH continues to be active during this pre-election year, working with national, state and local Democratic organizations and grassroots activists. Our Vice-Chair Cheryl Brickey has been working with the Democratic National Committee on a number of initiatives that we will be participating in as the key issues emerge in the 2023/2024 race.

These include focusing on book banning and other education restrictions, abortion access, protection of LGBTQ people and gun violence resources. We are also providing information on state and local races, not only in California but around the nation, with an emphasize on voter registration with organizations like Vote Save America.

John Gallogly, along with Cheryl and Caitlin Gallogly have been working with California Action Councils to educate and energize voters in local Congressional races. While the primary focus has been on flipping District 27 from red to blue, the UDH will also likely be working in a number of Congressional districts that have been targeted by the DCCC, including in SoCal - CA-40, CA-41, CA-45, CA-47.

UHD would also like to congratulate Brandon Lamar who is the President of the Young Democrats of Pasadena. We look forward to welcoming Brandon as part of the UDH Steering Committee. We will soon begin planning for our fall fundraiser, Oktoberfest, even as we continue to provide information about ongoing events and volunteer opportunities on our website, pasadenademocrats.com. As you might imagine, there is a lot going on around the nation and the UDH continues to be an active participant. We are working hard for justice and democracy but we need your help! Please volunteer to phone bank, text or postcard during this important year in the runup to 2024.

~ Hoyt Hillsman, President UDH Steering Comm.

Letter to the Editor



As a long-time ACT member, I strongly support ACT's editorial policy of welcoming signed articles and opinions to the Phoenix. However, I do not think it is appropriate to include an opinion piece as part of a report from a political action committee. And this is what Hoyt Hilsman did in "UDH Update" in the May issue of the Phoenix. Although he indicated that "it is solely my opinion as a former PCC Trustee and does not reflect the views of the UDH or any other organization," there may have been some confusion about the role of the UDH in taking positions on issues.

I have been a member of the UDH Steering Committee since its formation in the early 1990's and will attest that the Committee does not take positions on matters outside of its charter to "support the election of voter-nominated candidates who have indicated party preference Democratic in general elections" and to support or oppose ballot measures that would affect this goal. In this instance, the Committee did not take a position on or even discuss the "turmoil" surrounding the PCC Board and Superintendent/President.

As a former PCC Trustee, Pasadena City College is very important to me. With the support of ACT and the faculty union, I was elected to the Board when the college was in a crisis after the passage of Proposition 13 which radically changed the funding base for community colleges. I have worked very hard with the college and the community for years to help build the college to its current position as one of the top community colleges in the country. I agree with Hoyt in hoping that "some semblance of rational leadership" will be restored. However, I believe that an opinion piece should be clearly identified as an opinion piece and not presented as part of a report on the activities of the UDH.

~ Jeanette Mann

Jeanette: *We have to agree with you. If we had been thinking at the time, we would have split Hoyt's "UDH Update" from what was essentially an opinion piece about the PCC situation.* The Editors

May 2023 Re-Org State Convention

There is Still Time to Sign Up for the CADEM Convention.

During the Convention, from May 25 - 28, we'll be focusing on the work to support people-powered leaders in every corner of our state and across the nation. To build on our progress, we must do so on a year-round basis and at every possible opportunity. Join CADEM in May in Los Angeles to continue our organizing work.

You can still sign up to Text Young Voters at the Convention in Los Angeles, CA or you can sign up to text from ANYWHERE.

Don't forget to join our Forever Organizing Exhibit Booth on Friday, May 26 from 1 p.m. - 8 p.m. and Saturday, May 27 from 1 p.m. - 8 p.m. at the LACC EXHIBIT HALL B!

For information go to CDPConvention.org



Help Wanted!



ACT and ADC desperately need a new **Recording Secretary** (or two Recording Secretaries to share the job) to take the Minutes of our meetings.

Our grateful thanks go to our super (and long-time) Recording Secretary, Mona Field. But now Mona has to resign and we need to replace her.

You know the job: attend the meeting, take good notes and then, write up the Minutes. If we can find two willing people, that would be five or six meetings each per year. And we have back-up Recording Secretaries to fill in should the regular person(s) have scheduling conflicts. Men are welcome, too.

If you are interested, or have questions about the job, please contact Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com or 626 864-5255.



Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman

Tuesday, May 16.

A few more shoes have dropped this month – a conviction in the civil trial in New York along with a \$5 million judgment (which is probably rather less than the legal fees the former President has been accumulating), and immunity deals for eight of the “fake” electors in Georgia (which typically means they’re ratting out their colleagues and higher ups). Further, the Atlanta District Attorney, Fanni Willis, has provided a very specific timeline for bringing indictments in July, based on the schedule of a particular court in Atlanta.

But the really interesting news, even more than the debt ceiling negotiations, is from Ohio, of all places.

Encouraged by the success in Michigan of a constitutional amendment enshrining reproductive rights in that state’s Constitution (and powering a Democratic sweep of all three state-wide elected offices as well as both houses of the State Legislature), reproductive rights advocates in Ohio began collecting signatures for a similar Constitutional amendment there. Early signs are that the measure could easily pass, with well over 55% support in the polls. Needless to say, this panicked GOP hardliners, because even with control of the state legislature and the Governorship, a Constitutional amendment would stymie their plans.

So they hatched a deviously clever plan. They

would move the goalpost – enact a constitutional amendment to require a 60% majority, instead of 50%, to pass any future amendments or ballot measures. Further, they would make it substantially more difficult to qualify any future constitutional amendments by, first, eliminating the 10-day “cure” period (during which, if proponents fall slightly short of the needed number of signatures, they can gather more signatures or contest the disqualification of some of the signatures they submitted). Secondly, under current law, proponents need signatures from 10% of the registered voters in the state as a whole, but they also need to get signatures from at least 5% of the registered voters in half of Ohio’s 88 counties – forcing proponents to get support in at least some rural areas as well as urban and suburban areas. But the GOP proposal would require signatures from 5% of the voters in every single county, thus giving significantly more power to the small rural counties.

Further, for the plan to work, this change would have to be in place before the reproductive rights amendment went before voters in November, 2023. So the GOP decided to schedule a special August election, even though, earlier this year, the legislature just banned August special elections because of high cost and low turnout. The GOP tried to pass a new law specifically authorizing an August election this year, and providing funding for it, but a GOP committee chair in the State Assembly decided that was a bridge too far and refused to schedule a hearing for that bill. (Perhaps he drew some inspiration from Arizona’s Rusty Bowers, the State House Speaker who resisted efforts to undermine the 2020 elections.) Not to be deterred, the GOP leadership simply changed the Constitutional Amendment to include language authorizing the August special election and rammed it through the Legislature.

Reproductive rights advocates, not surprisingly,

are asking the state's Supreme Court, which has original jurisdiction in these cases, to block the August election. Various non-partisan legal experts are mostly dubious about the legality of the GOP strategy. Additionally, all four living ex-Governors, including Republicans John Kasich and Bob Taft, are opposing the amendment, along with all four ex-Attorneys General. But should the Court rule in favor of an August special election, the reproductive rights advocates and groups like Common Cause have already coalesced to form a One Person One Vote campaign against the measure.

Sadly, this tale is yet another example of how unrestrained the ruling elements of the GOP have become in trying to entrench their minority rule. First it was exploiting the filibuster rule in the Senate, turning it from a tool used only occasionally and on major issues to one used routinely to obstruct any action attempted by the majority. They progressed to packing the Supreme Court, by obstructing one nomination and fast-tracking another, without a trace of embarrassment that the two were under essentially identical circumstances. Now they are using their slim majority in the House to attempt to dictate policy to the Senate and President – not to compromise, but to insist on their whole loaf lest they set fire to the house. In state legislatures, they preserve their control through outrageous gerrymanders, despite repeatedly losing state-wide offices. In several southern states, it has become common for GOP-controlled state governments to intrude upon, or even take over, powers from cities and counties with Democratic majorities (but, of course, not from those with Republican majorities).

At some point, these plans must come a cropper. Even a GOP-leaning Ohio Supreme Court seems



likely to give the August election a thumbs-down. But relying on occasional “old-school” Republicans is a weak reed. The key step forward is to retake the House, and hold the Senate and White House, in 2024, with a Senate majority that can cripple, if not eliminate, the filibuster, after which we can reinvigorate the Voting Rights Act and other measures ensuring easier access to voting. (And, by the way, let's eliminate the idiotic concept of a debt limit – if we don't want to run up higher debts, don't spend the money in the first place.)

Is it reasonable to hope that we can win the House and strengthen our grip on the Senate? I think it's entirely reasonable. We need only five seats in the House (and perhaps only four, once George Santos gets convicted and/or expelled from the House.) There are 18 “Biden” House districts – districts which Biden carried in 2020 but which are now represented by Republicans. Democrats are recruiting strong candidates in all of those districts, and they will be the focus of exceptional fundraising efforts and a coordinated campaign with the Presidential campaign. So I think we've got a good chance of turning things around at the national level, notwithstanding the desperate, scorched-earth tactics of the GOP.

~ Jon Fuhrman



Special Thanks to Sustaining Members

Sue Basmajian
Mary Hayden & Carla Tomaso
Ann Marie Hickambottom
Lara Larramendi
R. Rhoads Stephenson & Hanne Bauer

Disarm Them, a Book Review

by Marcielle Brandler

Win Every Argument by Mehdi Hassan

We Dems need to better stake our claim to being actively and actually helping "We the People" of our beautiful divided country. Our brothers and sisters should be clearly informed that we've got their backs. In public and private discourse, we must develop better tools in our argumentations.

Mehdi Hassan gives us great suggestions for winning arguments with opponents that will create undisputed wins. In his book, *Win Every Argument*, he shares his successful methods. One of the best is that we need to "show our receipts" as a speaker on a panel or any discussion with someone on the other side of the aisle. This means that we must do our research on what our opponent has said on the record and basically trick him into conceding our point. This is the Logos part of Aristotle's Three Rhetorical Appeals, in which the speaker appeals to logic. Hassan takes it a step further in setting a trap for the other side. Of course, this takes skill and practice, but it is worth it, if we can sway others in a polite and solid manner.

During a debate between Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, and George H. W. Bush, a young woman asked a question during which Bush took a long look at his watch, and because he wasn't listening, it appeared that he didn't care about her concerns. Fifty-eight percent of Americans declared Clinton the winner of that second presidential debate in Virginia. Clinton really listened to the question and gave a detailed answer. This is one example of paying attention and how vital it is. Too many of us are anxious to say our spiel and merely wait until it is our turn to talk - to our detriment.

A few of Mehdi's (I feel like I know him now) chapter titles are "Judo Moves," "The Art of the

Zinger," and "Setting Booby Traps". Many of his ideas are likely some we have already heard, but the manner in which Hassan presents them are very easy to understand and implement.

Hassan shows us that the use of humor can disarm an audience. We all know that, but most of us need guidance on exactly how to accomplish it. In "Make Them Laugh," he talks about how laughter binds us together and makes us feel a kinship with those who laugh with us. He quotes Herb Gardner, playwright, saying, "Once you get people laughing, they're listening and you can tell them almost anything." So our glorious country can return to being "indivisible" as we were meant to be.

~ Marcielle Brandler



ACTpasadena.org

Please check out our website. The *On-line Phoenix* (in color) is there. It may contain items that we could not fit into the paper *Phoenix*. A *Phoenix* archive is always available at the website as well. As are many other items of interest including event photos.

Website Manager Bruce Wright welcomes your suggestions at: brucewright@sbcglobal.net.



Welcome New and Returning ACT Members

George & Beth Elder, Altadena
John Harabedian, Sierra Madre

Special Thanks to Patrons

Susan & John Caldwell
Kevin Ennis
Aaron Milam
Charles & Eileen Read



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



Dear ACT Members,

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the ACT 50th anniversary celebration in the fall. The half-century of ACT has been filled with tremendous political history, and I am confident that the next five decades will be as well. I've been blessed to have been a two-time ACT Co-chair, endorsement recipient, friend, and member for almost half of that time. The very first political meeting I ever had was at Shakers with the late Judy Boggs and Janice Laruccia where they introduced me to ACT, and I've enjoyed and benefited from the organization ever since.

I have some exciting educational news to share. Many of you know that I've been an advocate for universal screening of first-grade students for early literacy challenges and reading readiness. Dyslexia is the most common and most notable issue facing a significant number of California students. Although California leads on many issues, it has lagged behind on early education universal screening. Last week that all changed as Governor Newsom announced that he was including the contents of my early literacy screening bill in this year's budget. It is the responsibility of our schools to teach our children how to read, and using every tool to aid that effort is important. Sadly, universal screening has received significant opposition over the past three years and stalled in the Assembly. By including it in the budget, we will include this important educational effort to help our students.

The Governor and I both struggled with dyslexia as school children, and I was very pleased to work with him to bring this screening mandate to

fruition. Over the past several years, the Governor has included money in the budget for the University of San Francisco to develop a cutting-edge dyslexia app, and we are now ready to use it to help kids.

Senator Anthony Portantino represents California's 25th State Senate District, which stretches along the 210 Freeway from Sunland/Tujunga to Upland. He proudly represents the Rose Bowl, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Griffith Park, Warner Brothers, Disney, Caltech and the Claremont Colleges.



Really Special Thanks to Benefactors

Laurence Eggers

Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Sue Basmajian

R. Rhoads Stephenson & Hanne Bauer

Bill Suter & Marsha Tylke

Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Political Account

Laurence Eggers

Jim & Priscilla Gamb

R. Rhoads Stephenson & Hanne Bauer

Carol & Carl Selkin

Bill Suter & Marsha Tylke

From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden



Dear ACT Friends,

We have had a productive legislative session the past few months with completing the policy committee deadlines and now seeing bills come through the Assembly Appropriations Committee. My office has worked on legislation that is threading the needle forward, and I am proud to see these policies go through to the next phase.

Many people do not realize the inhumanity in the practice of solitary confinement, let alone how loosely it is regulated here in California and around the country.

Several other progressive nations have already classified the practice as torture, but here in the U.S. some of our most vulnerable members of incarcerated populations can end up locked alone in a cell the size of a parking spot for days or months at a time. This can leave detrimental effects that may last well into a person's release from incarceration and often times are irreversible, making rehabilitation impossible. For this reason, I saw it as imperative to introduce AB 280, which would set regulations on how this practice can be used and established a standard for recognizing its misuse. This is a start, and overtime I urge that we as legislators and leaders continue to refine and correct our criminal justice standards.

Another group of people we must work to place more protections around are our workers. Too often franchisors have their franchisees in a financial chokehold, forcing them to overwork their employees and violate labor laws. Last month my legislation, AB 1228, which would hold franchisors accountable in certain cases

where their regulations caused their franchisee to infringe on employee rights, passed the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. Everyone is entitled to a safe and reasonable work environment, and my bill would help to establish that for franchisees and the people they hire.

Finally, I am always eager to support and celebrate our young people and their achievements. I'll have to admit that the victory is that much sweeter when it's your former school and sports team. I played for the SDSU Aztecs back in my college days so ACR 60 is a special recognition that's near and dear to my heart. Although they were ultimately defeated in the tournament, they made history for their team and our state and deserve to be recognized.

I am proud to announce that the National Alliance of Mental Illness, San Gabriel Chapter, is my 41st AD Nonprofit of the Year. I look forward to honoring them at the State Capitol in June. May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It has been observed in the U.S. since 1949. Every year during May, NAMI joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Together, we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for policies supporting millions of people in the U.S. affected by mental illness.

I look forward to keeping you up to date in the next newsletter.

Sincerely, ~ Chris R. Holden

Assemblyman Holden represents some 420,000 people in the foothills communities of Altadena, Pasadena, South Pasadena, Monrovia, Sierra Madre, San Dimas, La Verne,

Claremont, and Upland.

He can be reached via his website at:

www.asm.ca.-gov/

***Holden** and fill out the form.*



My Two Cents

By Ron Garber



On a daily basis I get my written news from three sources; the L.A. Times, front and California sections which include their editorial content, the Pasadena Star News opinion section only, and the internet through the Yahoo home page. I both read and contribute to the newspaper 'letters to the editor' content and Yahoo's comments section which follow every news story. Over the last month the following content piqued my interest.

In regard to a Times op-ed **"Don't put stock in the polls"** re **"Why Biden's really bad approval ratings make no difference"** **May 10**. I submitted the following letter which was published on the twelfth:

I'm one of the millions of Democrats who are not enthralled by President Biden.

But should he be our candidate, I will not only vote for him, but will also make the maximum allowable donation and volunteer on a full-time basis (as I'm retired and have the time) to see that he's elected, regardless of whom his opponent may be. Usually when I make these categorical statements, I say that I only speak for myself, but I don't believe that I am alone in these feelings.

This was the 51st letter I've had published in the Times over the last 20+ years. I had originally had a goal of 50 when many years ago I read a story about one of their letter writers who had his 50th letter published, but a few weeks ago they published a eulogy for a woman who was proud of the 65 letters that she had published in the Times, so, I guess I'm not through.



Since the Supreme Court's ruling throwing out Roe, not a day goes by when Yahoo doesn't have at least one story dealing with Women's reproductive rights, and while I respond to dozens of comments that I disagree with, I've developed my own comment which crystalizes my pro-choice position:

Based on law, science, religion, medicine and other criteria there are various definitions of when life begins. Some but by no means all of those definitions include conception, first heartbeat, viability and first breath after expulsion from the birth canal. Every one of these definitions is correct based on each individual's personal beliefs, but the ONLY pertinent definition is that which is held by the person carrying the fetus. No one has the right to impose their beliefs on others.

I know I'm starting to sound like a broken record, as recently I've admonished in this column against funding good Democratic candidates running against other good Democratic candidates in primaries and recently it has dawned on me that because of California's wacky primary system, it's much more than likely we're going to be plagued with two of the very best Democratic candidates pitted against each other in not only the primary, but the general election as well. There are fine Los Angeles County Congressional Representatives like Jimmy Gomez and my Congresswoman Grace Napolitano who barely have a local profile much less a national one. Adam Schiff and Katie Porter are both vocal proponents of progressive policy, who regularly are major thorns in the Republican psyche and each would make a wonderful Senator who would admirably be able to make use of that enlarged soapbox to good advantage. My concerns are twofold. First even though a California senate seat carries no more weight than one from a state like Wyoming whose population is no greater than that of a single congressional district,

the potential costs for the two Democratic finalists may exceed 100 million dollars. Imagine how far those funds would go in flipping the 5 congressional districts we need to recapture the House and second, no matter which of these two stellar candidates wins, the other will have to sit on the sidelines for two years.



During a one-week period in the last month there were 4 incidents of innocent people being shot by civilians under the guise of 'stand your ground' laws that are prominent in gun loving red states and it occurred to me that:

Under 'Stand your ground' you don't have to be threatened to kill with impunity, you don't even have to 'feel' threatened. All you have to do is say that you felt threatened.

Briefly other observations over the last month include an intriguing story in the L.A. Times about carbon sequestration in the oceans which may be the key to fighting global warming. This has captured my attention like no other story since it was reported in 1989 that two scientists had produced positive results with a machine that produced energy from 'ColdFusion' which got widespread publicity, but soon thereafter was debunked when other scientists couldn't replicate their results. Here's hoping that this breakthrough has more promising results.

Under the rubric, 'what has come to pass?'; when I was young, say grade school, there was a common agreement that the policeman was your friend and there was universal respect for law enforcement. I understand that all police officers are not good, but the vast majority are and they still have my respect. Last month in a story picked up by Yahoo, a policeman named Sandoval was killed in a car crash supposedly in Azusa. As the intersection the story reported the accident had happened was not in Azusa, but rather in Covina, I went to the comments section to report that correction. I was appalled at the vitriol

I read in the comments section. Without even knowing anything about this man, the glee evidenced by these comments was sickening. It seems that with a certain element, all police are stereotyped by what a handful of bad apples have done to sour the well of public opinion. All change is not necessarily good.

Since FOX News settled its defamation law suit, I've been thinking about some other differences between FOX and MSNBC. To its credit, MSNBC is anchored in 6 of its 24 hours in Monday through Friday scheduling by prominent Republicans; former Congressman Joe Scarborough in 'Morning Joe' which airs from 3 to 7 a.m. and former Presidential press chief Nicole Wallace in 'Dateline: White House from 1 to 3 p.m. The network also uses Republican commentators who were a Republican Congressman and the Chief of the Republican National Committee. By contrast FOX only uses Democrats to balance panel shows and they are usually outnumbered by 3 to 1 or 4 to 1. Neither network is balanced, but there is no reason why they need to be. At least MSNBC never falsely claimed to be balanced.



It's a topsy turvy world that finds me in agreement with Clarence Thomas and opposed to Joe Biden on an issue decided by the Supreme Court, but it happened last week. California voters using the initiative process passed legislation that requires pigs bred for food and laying hens to have a specified amount of space if the vendors of the meat and eggs want to sell their product in our state. Most of the pork we eat in the California comes from out of state and the pork suppliers sued to negate this rule. Bottom line the President sided with the pork producers and surprise, surprise Thomas stood with the animals and the California voters.

On a personal note, I reported last year that I had received a jury summons and would report on court conditions during Covid. I postponed and

then cancelled because of my age and pandemic concerns. Fast forward to last month when I received another summons. I reported on May 5 and am starting my 2nd week of what could potentially be a 5-week trial. Until the trial is over, I can't tell you anything about it, but I can tell you that I'm alternate #5 with 18 jurors having been selected over a 5-day period. I'm juror #438 with #454 being the last selected. The case is being heard on the only floor that requires security over and above that which is required just to enter the building. Stay tuned for more info.

And finally, if 360 people, all started out walking at the same time, at the same pace for the exact same amount of time each day, each setting off in a different direction (there are 360 degrees in a circle), assuming the earth is perfectly round and they were walking at sea level which would require paved walkways across water and tunnels to traverse land, at some point they would meet each other on the opposite side of the earth from where they started. I started this journey on October 1, 2020, and sometime this week that's where I'll be. Be safe,

~ Ron out



Ed Washatka and Linda Centell enjoy their *Phoenix* in Marrakesh!

Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



“The Triumph of Injustice: How the Rich Dodge Taxes and How to Make them Pay”,
by Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zuckman;
and ***“People, Power and Profits: Progressive Capitalism for the Age of Discontent”***
by Joseph E. Stiglitz.

Drs. Saez and Zuckman are economics professors at UC Berkeley. Dr. Joseph Stiglitz served in the Clinton Administration, first as a member during 1993–1995, and then as Chairman, of the Council of Economic Advisers, in which capacity he also served as a member of the cabinet. Prof Stiglitz was winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics and now teaches at Columbia University.

These two books continue the examination of some major themes of *Davos Man* and Bernie Sanders’ *It’s OK to Be Angry About Capitalism*. These themes include the post-Cold War trend toward “globalization”, the dominance of international corporations, and the weakening of the US tax structure.

Davos Man is a study of how the increasing inequity in income and wealth came about through this globalization, off-shoring, and regressive US tax structure. And Bernie Sanders sums up: “There are the Wall Street investors and corporate CEOs who determine whether jobs will stay in this country or go abroad, what kind of incomes working people will earn, and what the price of gas, prescription drugs and food will be. And while these oligarchs exert enormous influence over our lives, ordinary people have virtually no power in shaping the future of the country. They lack the institutions to exert influence,

and they are too busy just trying to survive.” Both *Davos Man* and Senator Sanders describe the increasing power of the corporations as becoming monopolistic and stifling competition, as well as aggressively pursuing tax loopholes and tax evasion. Since the 1980s, with Reagan era tax cuts and deregulation (continued under Clinton), there has been a weakening of government oversight through bank regulation and anti-trust litigation, and trade policies that encouraged offshoring of manufacturing.

Starting in the 1980s, large accounting firms such as KMPG, Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers began developing and marketing tax avoidance schemes to their corporate clients. These involved setting up subsidiaries in places like Bermuda and Ireland; and the fraction of foreign profits booked in these tax-free havens increased by 25%. At the same time, the resource-starved IRS (with over 4000 fewer auditors in 2017 compared with 2010) decreased the number of audits of the exceedingly complex tax returns of these corporations.

While in 1979 the top 0.1% of Americans owned about 7% of the nation’s wealth, today that percentage has more than doubled to 18%, according to the World Inequality Database. Where was the failure?

As Joseph Stiglitz puts it: “The government’s fundamental role in a market economy ... is both to do what markets won’t and can’t do, as well as to make sure that markets act as they are supposed to. For markets to work well on their own, there has to be robust competition, information [transparency] has to be perfect, and actions of one individual or firm can’t impose harm on others,” e.g., through pollution or health or safety hazards.

While Senator Sanders addresses these issues from a political and social standpoint, the book by Berkeley economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zuckman delve into these issues from the

standpoint of academic economists. There are statistics and graphical displays of information to back up the assertions of Sanders, particularly on the growing income disparity in the US – much greater disparity than in Europe. Saez and Zuckman give a history of tax policy since the Civil War (when the income tax was first introduced) through the adoption of the 16th amendment in 1913, on the higher tax rates during World War II and the Eisenhower era, and tax rate reductions of the 1980s. They have done extensive economic modelling, drawing on a century of economic statistics. They have estimated how much each social group, from the poorest to the billionaires, has paid in taxes since 1913. And they have developed a modelling and simulation tool, which is available at their website [//taxjustice-now.org](http://taxjustice-now.org), “that allows policy makers and activists ... to estimate the effects of [their chosen] tax policy changes or the distribution of taxes, the income or wealth of each social group [resulting from a set of proposed changes], and the dynamics of inequality.”

So, what are the suggested remedies in these four books? Peter Goodman in *Davos Man* describes the role of an extensive network of cooperatives, which can operate in competition with the large commercial corporations on behalf of their members. Bernie Sanders has a host of suggestions, including universal health care, reducing the influence of super-PACs, reforming the major news networks that are corporate owned, strengthening our education system with higher pay for teachers and free tuition, and aggressive community organizing, etc. But Sanders does not really discuss tax policy. Both Stiglitz, and Saez and Zuckman, on the other hand, focus on needed changes in tax policy, both to make the tax structure more progressive (it is now regressive) and to empower the IRS to increase audits and Justice Department to crack down on tax fraud and evasion. They suggest first, closing the

tax avoidance loopholes, then equalizing the ordinary income rate and capital gains tax rates, and increasing the highest marginal tax rates to increase revenue. In addition, they promote a “wealth tax”. They point out that those possessing the greatest wealth often have low taxable income, so even higher marginal rates would not affect them. A wealth tax would assure that these ultra-wealthy do not pay less than the rest of the population.

Saez and Zuckman provide a summary: “Wealth is power. An extreme concentration of wealth means an extreme concentration of power: the power to influence government policy; the power to stifle competition; the power to shape ideology.” And, “The triumph of tax injustice is, above all, a denial of democracy.”

Here is a reference to a video by Frontline that illustrates the way that corporations evade paying US corporate income tax, and how KMPG devised this scheme: *Tax Me If You Can*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLZEhAQx81s>

~ Robert V Frampton

Next Month: “*Rural Rebellion: How Nebraska Became a Republican Stronghold*” by Ross Benes. Once the land of progressive populism, electing progressive leaders like William Jennings Bryan and Senator George Norris, Nebraska has forgotten its liberal past as it became a Republican stronghold. This book by journalist Ross Benes, examines this transition.



June Phoenix Deadline

The deadline for copy for the June *Phoenix* will be Monday, June 12. Send items for publication to Chuck Hains at hains27@sbcglobal.net and Sally Beer at sally.beer125@gmail.com. (Chuck will continue to contact regular contributors with a deadline reminder.)



Calendar

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>May 25-28
Thursday
-Sunday</p> | <p>California Democratic State Convention at the LA Marriott and the LA Convention Center. Information can be found at CDP-Convention.org.</p> |
| <p>June 8
Thursday
7 p.m</p> | <p>ACT and ADC Meeting at 654 S. Madison Ave., Pasadena. Program: Pasadena Young Democrats Club. Socializing, 7 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.</p> |
| <p>June 12</p> | <p>Phoenix deadline. Monday</p> |
| <p>June 12
Monday</p> | <p>UDH Steering Meeting via Zoom. 5:30 p.m.</p> |
| <p>July 20
Thursday
6:30 p.m.</p> | <p>ACT and ADC Potluck Meeting with DA George Gascon as special guest speaker.</p> |
| <p>Mid Sept.</p> | <p>ACT’s 50th Anniversary Celebration and Fundraiser. Details coming. (It will be on a Sunday afternoon in September, the date still to be determined.)</p> |



Your Photo in The Phoenix

Please share a photo (of you) at an interesting place – either near or far - with *Phoenix* readers. Send it to Chuck at hains27@sbcglobal.net for inclusion in an upcoming issue.



ACT and ADC Membership Dues for 2023

Renew your membership for 2023! Dues categories are listed below. Please note that you can join both ACT and ADC for bargain rates. So why not do so?? Please send your check with the form below, respond to your renewal letter with your check, or renew online at our website. (And thanks to those generous members who have already paid up. We love you!).



Send checks c/o ACT/ADC, P. O. Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074. If you have any questions about your membership contact Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@charter.net or 626-864-5255.

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Gift Membership (NEW!) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$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 you provide will be available to other members and endorsed candidates upon request.