



**The Official Publication of ACT**

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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer



## **Assembly District Elections for California Democrats**



We have a chance to take action to elect Democratic leaders in the ADEM election locally this month. The people we elect will serve their Assembly District as delegates to the CA Democratic Party Convention. These delegates serve an important role in helping shape the platform, organization, and state and federal office endorsements.

A number of ACT/Arroyo Democratic Club members are running for your consideration (you can vote for up to 14):

**AD 41:** Char Bland, Catherine Blue Holmes, Denise Robb, Yarma Velazquez, Ryan Bell,  
Steve Gibson, Brandon Lamar, Tim Wendler

**AD 49:** Tina Fredericks

If you have already signed up for a vote-by-mail ballot, the ballots were put in the mail to you on January 6 and are due back by January 31.

If you have not registered to vote by mail, you can still register to vote in person at: <https://ademelections.com/register/person>

In person voting for the 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly District will be January 21 (Saturday) from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm at UFCW Local 1428, 705 W. Arrow Highway, Claremont, CA 91711.

~ Tim Wendler, ADC president

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### **ACT Member Peter Dreier Honored**

ACT member Peter Dreier was honored with the Marvin Gross Social Justice Award on Friday, January 13.

This prestigious award, in memory of Rabbi

Marvin Gross, was awarded during the Friday night Martin Luther King Shabbat service at the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center. The award recognizes Dreier's decades of commitment to social justice.

## Hickambottom Elected ACT Co-Chair



We have a new ACT Co-Chair, Ann Marie Hickambottom. Ann was unanimously elected by ACT members at the January 5 General Membership Meeting. We are delighted to have her. Welcome, Ann!

Other officers were elected for 2023 at the same meeting. All are listed below along with committee chairs and committee members. Thanks folks, for giving your time and expertise to this work.

### 2023 ACT Steering Committee

Co-Chairs: Cheryl Brickey, George Brumder,  
Ann Marie Hickambottom

Recording Secretary: Mona Field  
(Barbara Paul, Sally Beer - backups)

Corresponding Secretary: Beth Gertmenian  
(Monica Hubbard - backup)

Treasurer: Ed Washatka

### Committees:

Computer/Webpage – Bruce Wright (Chair),  
Marcus Green, Jon Fuhrman, Elliot Cuite, Craig  
Kaneshiro, Paul Hunt

Fundraising – Fred Register (Chair),  
Denise Robb, Cheryl Brickey,  
Teresa Lamb Simpson, Veronica Raymond,  
Anita Pemstein, Bill Hacket,  
Anthony Portantino, Barbara Paul,  
Jeanne Register, Felicia Rusnak,  
Tammy Silver, Dan Sheehan

Mailing – Sally Beer (Chair), Jon Fuhrman,  
Barbara Paul, Ann Hunnewell, Ron Garber,  
Karen Breau, Chuck Hains, Jim Heringer,  
Tom Hubbard, Monica Hubbard, Ray Fisher,  
Kris Ockershauser

*The Phoenix* – Chuck Hains, Sally Beer

Program – Tammy Silver, Jon Fuhrman,  
Cheryl Brickey, George Brumder,  
Ron Garber, Dan Sheehan

Research – Marilee Marshall & Tim Wendler  
(Co-Chairs), Susan Kane, Bruce Wright,  
George VanAlstine, Jeanette Mann,  
Jon Fuhrman, Joanne Wendler, Ron Garber,  
Monica Hubbard, Beth Gertmenian,  
Ed Washatka, Marguerite Cooper,  
Betty Krachman, Barbara Paul, Karen Breau,  
Denise Robb, George Brumder

*Note: All former ACT Co-Chairs are Steering  
Committee members, too. Some of them are not  
listed here.*

### 2023 Arroyo Democratic Club Officers

President: Tim Wendler

Vice-President: Bruce Wright

Secretaries and Treasurer: Same as ACT

*Please tell us about any mistakes you find in the  
above lists. Also please let us know if you would like  
to serve on an ACT committee (and thus become a  
Steering Committee member.) Contact Executive Di-  
rector Jon Fuhrman at [jon\\_fuhrman@outlook.com](mailto:jon_fuhrman@outlook.com).  
(That's jon underscore fuhrman.)*



## Next ACT and ADC Meeting

**Thursday, February 2, 7 p.m. via Zoom**

ACT's and the Arroyo Democratic Club's Febru-  
ary meeting is scheduled for February 2.

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

Note: the program had not been decided in time  
for this *Phoenix*. (Programs being considered for  
our early 2023 meetings are Climate Change, key  
new CA laws taking effect in 2023, Pasadena  
Housing and Homelessness issues, and overall  
Pasadena Housing with Pasadena Housing Direc-  
tor Bill Huang.)

Everyone is welcome and urged to join in. Socializing on Zoom begins at 7 p.m., with the meeting following at 7:30 p.m. If you do not receive an email giving you Zoom access to the meeting, please go to our website for access:

<http://www.ACTpasadena.org>.



## UDH - Looking Ahead

As we usher in the New Year, the ever-changing landscape of American politics continues to challenge us at the national, state and local level. The midterm elections showed strong results for the Democrats as we picked up another seat in the Senate, and narrowly lost the House, despite predictions of a “red wave.” Our efforts were particularly fruitful in Arizona and Nevada, where we held onto the Senate seats. And in the California House races, we also managed to hold our own, despite some disappointingly close losses.

What will the New Year bring? With the disarray in the House Republican conference and McCarthy’s tenuous hold on the speakership, we can expect a lot of right-wing “message” legislation on everything from guns and abortion to anti-immigrant and anti-voting rights. And we can count on the Republicans to conduct investigations on everything from Hunter Biden to the FBI and Justice Department.

It is important that Democrats not overreact to the baiting from the House Republicans. If we stick to the issues that are most important to the American people rather than responding to every MAGA troll, we will improve our chances going forward. With divided government, we can expect that the Biden administration will not be able to accomplish as much as it did in the past two years. However, if we continue to govern responsibly and competently, then we will be in a

strong position in 2024.

On the state level, Governor Newsom has an ambitious agenda that includes climate action, homelessness, education, labor reform and other top priorities. With a strong economy and support of the Democratic legislature and grassroots, he should be able to accomplish a lot. On the local level, change is in the air. Both the local state assembly and senate seats will be open in 2024, and we expect serious competition for both of those seats. In addition, several board members at PUSD and PCC will be up for re-election and if the past is any indication, there will be strong challenges for all of those seats.

For the next year and beyond, the UDH will continue to be a source of information and action for our grassroots Democrats as we work to secure a progressive future for our communities.

~ Hoyt Hilsman



## The Landscape of American Politics:

### A Conversation with Hoyt Hilsman & Jon Fuhrman

Parson’s Nose Theater will host its first in a series of conversations on topics of interest, ranging from the arts and culture to politics and science. This will be a conversation between Hoyt Hilsman, author and political activist and Jon Fuhrman, the Executive Director of ACT.

After an eventful year in American politics, Hilsman and Fuhrman will examine not only national trends, but also important events in our local and state communities. They will discuss the significant issues confronting citizens in the coming year as well as local, state and national campaigns.

The conversation will take place on Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 7-8 pm at Parson’s Nose Theater, 95 N. Marengo in Pasadena. The event is free but reservations are required since seating is limited. RSVP to [hoyth75@gmail.com](mailto:hoyth75@gmail.com) or call 626-755-3498.

## Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Monday, Jan. 9.

Who hasn't heard that old saying – if you don't succeed at first, try 14 more times? All right, I'll concede that I hadn't heard that particular variant, but apparently newly elected Speaker Kevin McCarthy had, and it worked for him. That he had to abase himself before a bunch of wackadoodles, with the whole country watching, must have taken some of the fun out of it. All that notwithstanding, McCarthy achieved his dream of being Speaker of the House. That has to count for something.

Most commentators are arguing that the Speakership is fatally weakened, particularly by two concessions McCarthy has made: allowing any single member of the majority to introduce a "motion to vacate the Chair" at any time, and guaranteeing three Freedom Caucus members seats on the Rules Committee, giving them

(along with the four Democrats) functional veto power over the remaining six GOP members on any bill or rule that goes to the House floor. However, I'm not sure that is necessarily how things will play out.

On the motion to vacate, the logic is that any time five or more ultra-right wing GOP members become dissatisfied with McCarthy's leadership, any one of them can offer the "privileged" motion to vacate, which must be debated and voted on before any other action is taken by the House. If all 213 Democrats were to vote against Speaker McCarthy, then it takes only five renegade GOP members to get to 218 and force a new Speakership election.

Yet that assumes all Democrats would vote against McCarthy, which is not at all obvious to me. While Dems might not want to vote for McCarthy, they could simply vote "Present". That would leave the 10 or 20 or 30 right-wing extremists hanging in the wind, with 190 more normal (but still quite conservative) GOP Congressmembers voting in support of McCarthy – which is what happened in the GOP caucus secret ballot when they voted 191 – 31 to support McCarthy for Speaker.

If that were to happen, then the stranglehold the extremists appear to hold would instantly evaporate. Their bluff would have been called, and their inherent weakness revealed. From then on, the Speaker would no longer have to shift farther and farther right to appease the extremists; rather, he could hew toward the center, alienating the extremists but finding at least some support from Democrats. It would be a delicate dance. Most of his caucus is hardly interested in finding common ground with, let alone appeasing, Democrats, but on particular issues – like support for Ukraine, or funding the armed forces, or keeping the government open, or extending the debt limit so the global financial system doesn't go into shock – there are probably at least a dozen GOP

members willing to support a moderately centrist compromise. Forty-seven GOP members voted in favor of the Respect for Marriage Act, so there is a blueprint for a centrist victory.

Similarly, on the Rules Committee, if the four Democrats vote against a rule and are joined by the three extremists, the rule would be defeated. But generally speaking, if the extremists are in favor of something, Democrats are likely against it. And if the extremists are against it, chances are Democrats might support it, or at least tolerate it as the best they can hope for. So once again, Democrats may often be thwarting the goals of the extremists, as well they should.

Interestingly, examples of bipartisanship seem to be springing to life in all sorts of unexpected places. In Pennsylvania, Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro selected a new Secretary of State to run the state's election machinery, and he chose a Republican. Of course, this particular Republican actually knows how to run elections, having helped run Philadelphia's election system for several years; he rebuffed former President Trump's efforts to impugn the integrity of their elections, and he testified before the Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> Committee about Trump's inappropriate attempts to undermine the election. Gov. Shapiro's choice has to be confirmed by the GOP-controlled State Senate, but hopefully by choosing a technically competent administrator who just happens to be a Republican, the Governor will have smoothed the confirmation process.

Also, in Pennsylvania, a remarkable drama has played out in their House of Representatives. After November's election, Democrats had won 102 seats to the 101 seats won by Republicans. But things weren't that simple. One of the Democratic incumbents died just days before the November election (but was re-elected nonetheless).

Further, two Democratic Representatives were simultaneously elected to higher office – one to be the Lt. Governor, and one to join the U.S. House of Representatives. That left the Democrats with only 99 warm bodies, compared to 101 for the Republicans. So, who becomes Speaker? That question was particularly important since the Speaker sets the date for the special elections to fill the vacant seats and would control the agenda until those seats were filled. Remarkably, the House turned to a compromise candidate – a Democrat, outside the party leadership, nominated by a Republican, with the support of the Democratic leadership and about a dozen GOP members. That compromise candidate, Mark Rozzi, then promised not to caucus with either the Democrats or the GOP and pledged to an independent.



Already Speaker Rozzi is running into turbulent waters. The Republican who nominated him is unhappy that Rozzi has not yet formally left the Democratic Party and is threatening to withdraw his support. But the special elections have formally been set for February 7<sup>th</sup>, and the

three districts are all strongly Democratic, so fairly soon the party balance will be at least 101 to 101, with Rozzi as the deciding vote.

This interim leadership agreement was particularly important in Pennsylvania because of a pending State Constitutional Amendment that would, like the amendment that was proposed in Kansas last summer, strip out any implicit protection for women's reproductive freedom. In Pennsylvania, State Constitutional Amendments must be approved by two successive sessions of the state legislature. The amendment was easily approved last year when the GOP controlled both houses, and looked to be on its way to final approval in this session, until the Democrats sur-

prisingly seemed to take control of the lower House. If a Speaker were to call it up for approval before the special election for the three Democratic vacancies, it might pass, or at least put GOP Representatives under enormous pressure from the far-right wing if they did not support it. So, having a Speaker who is not inclined to bring up the measure before the special elections bolster the Dem. majority was a huge win.

In Ohio, we saw another startling display of bipartisanship in their State House. The GOP has a 67 – 32 majority, and they voted 35 – 32 in caucus to support Rep. Derek Merrin as the new Speaker. Merrin, however, is a pretty hard-core conservative, while his opponent, Jason Stephens, is a much more traditional moderate. But when the actual election for Speaker was held, 22 Republicans teamed up with all 32 Democrats to give Stephens 55 votes and the Speaker's gavel, handing a decisive defeat to the ultra-conservative wing of the GOP. It's still a GOP Speaker, but the House is likely to veer away from the truly radical agenda of the hard-core conservatives. The Ohio State Republican Party is already censuring the 22 GOP Representatives who voted for the compromise Speaker, but that action doesn't seem to be having any perceptible impact.

Ohio presents a really interesting model for what might have happened, and perhaps still could happen, in the US House, should McCarthy's Speakership end up on rocky ground. Sadly, the moderate GOP wing in the US House still seems relatively passive. Only one member voted against a truly awful rules package. With time, though, perhaps the moderates will find their spine. My guess is that it will take a national security issue, like aid to Ukraine or preventing budget cuts to the military, before the moderate wing finds enough gumption to take on the Freedom Caucus.

~ Jon Fuhrman

## A Banned Book Attracts New Readers: Maus and Freedom of Information

by ACT member, Marcielle Brandler

In 1989, Salman Rushdie's book, *Satanic Verses* was banned, and on **Valentine's Day**, Rushdie learned that the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran had issued a fatwa against him. It was an international call to all Muslims to kill Rushdie. I immediately ran to my local bookstore and bought the mysterious book from a clerk who had it hidden behind the counter. I still have it. I read the entire book and did not understand a word of it, as the references were more applicable to Muslim-educated people than to my Christian-educated sensibilities. I knew nothing of Muslim culture or literature, so I was at a terrible disadvantage.

When Texas began to ban books in schools, newscasters mentioned a graphic book I had never heard of called *Maus*. It is a retelling of Nazi oppression in Germany from the perspective of a mouse with cats as Nazis. The author, Art Spiegelman, shares his father's story of escape. I couldn't put it down. The black-and-white drawings are raw and simple, yet they convey the emotions of the characters and the complex situations in which they find themselves. *Maus* has had a resurgence in sales since it has been banned.

In this time of forbidden information and complaints about how children should not be made to feel ashamed of who they are or to be made afraid, I recall having to do monthly duck-and-cover exercises in school because the Russians or Japanese might bomb us. We children were constantly afraid of nuclear war. The irony was that we were the ones who mercilessly nuked Japan. Texan parents are told that we should not learn anything negative about what our country has done, yet in Germany, it is illegal to deny the,

*Continued on page twelve*

**From  
25<sup>th</sup> District  
State Senator  
Anthony  
Portantino**



Dear ACT Friends,

I hope everyone is having a great start to your new year. Ellen and I were lucky to have Bella and Sofia home for the holidays. It was great to have the cat, Indiana Jones, with us, too. Sofia spent much of the past three years away on location, and I'm happy to have her back. Board games and pinochle helped us pass the time.

We are also back in Sacramento with the start of a new two-year session. I was pleased to have been reappointed as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee by Pro Tem Toni Atkins. I'm blessed to be serving with a terrific leader in contrast to the debacle that transpired in Washington last week. At first, watching the dysfunction over the speaker of the House vote was comical, but, in the end, it was tragic and worrisome. Knowing that the House of Representatives will be held captive by the extremist fringe of the MAGA world is downright scary.

On the positive side of the ledger, Leader Jeffries' first speech of the session was inspiring and outstanding. I believe it signified the initial battle of the 2024 election, and our Democratic congress members clearly outshined the Republicans under Kevin McCarthy.

Governor Newsom was sworn in for his second term, and we gaveled back to doing the people's business. This week, the Governor is set to introduce his first draft of the 2023-2024 budget. Unlike last year where we were charged with spending a budget with a nearly 100-billion-dollar surplus, this year's projections have us in a deficit.

Going into negotiations, my priorities will be maintaining school funding levels and advocating for several structural education issues. We need to focus on mental and behavioral health resources now more than ever. Special education and dyslexia screening are also important. Every year of elementary education is a critical building block for our children, and there are no throwaway years or kids. The phrase, time goes by too fast, is said for a reason. How we fund our public schools will also be a central focus of my agenda, and my longstanding gun control efforts will continue to be part of my legislative package.

Stay tuned for more details as we ramp up.

Respectfully,

~ Anthony

*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.*



Judy Boggs  
with Fred  
Register &  
Jon Fuhrman  
in the 1980's

**From**  
**41<sup>st</sup> District**  
**Assemblymember**  
**Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

I hope 2023 has kicked off to a great start with the holidays over and the promise of a new year ahead. One thing to look out for is our health as a community.

Last week, a compromise was reached to ensure Medi-Cal access across the State. The request for proposal (RFP) awards announced earlier in 2022 were done so without enrollees' input and consideration, and legislators like me questioned the reality this would bring to Medi-Cal enrollees, and we could not stay silent. We decided to write a letter and as a significant result, California's path to progress in improving healthcare (Medi-Cal) quality and access will no longer be disrupted. In a time that is still uncertain, we now can say for certain that Medi-Cal will continue to care for Californians irrespective of zip codes without disrupting their quality of care.

Additionally, I will be introducing a bill to put an end to 'ghost networks' and rampant provider inaccuracies by reinforcing current policy with accuracy guidelines, benchmark goals, and effective enforcement methods. Ghost networks contribute to inequity in health care by leaving many Californians to fend for themselves in their most vulnerable time. I am excited to support equity in California's healthcare and Medi-Cal.

I am honored to announce my re-appointment to Appropriations Chair and while we work on legislation, please know I will be advocating for equity, transparency, and solutions that work for Californians. This month I have also welcomed an Assembly Fellow to my team, Christopher

Adams II. His lived experience in our education system and passion for social justice and other issues made him an ideal candidate for my team.

In the district, I participated in the second annual Faith Leaders Unite Prayer and March. Each new year, The Tournament of Roses Parade and Rose Bowl Game usher in opportunity for the world to celebrate together, new hopes and great expectations for peace and goodwill. Starting the year in prayer and gratitude across the different faiths demonstrates our unity and belief that even a global pandemic would not deter our community celebration from marching on! Next, we are launching our Young Legislators Program with a record number of applicants this year. This program is near and dear to my heart. Each rotation of the Young Legislators Program is selected to help with confidence building, and public speaking, as well as exposure to resources and government offices.

Lastly, 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/](http://www.asm.ca.-gov/)*

*Holden and fill out the contact form.*





## My Two Cents

By Ron Garber



The 'Founding Fathers', wise men that they were, created the perfect Constitution to win approval of the original thirteen states in a 1789 American world, and knowing that times change, included two methods to amend that historic document. Unamended remnants of the original hold very undemocratic vestiges like a state having less than a million-population getting the same number of senators as one with 40 million, and by extension, the Electoral College - because of the Senate makeup - giving Wyoming voters almost three times as much clout as those from California. And while there was a need seen at that time for the second amendment, it's been misinterpreted in such a way that only Mexico, Guatemala and the United States grant the right to bear arms, but my pet peeve today is the tenth amendment.

Like other parts of the Constitution the 10th amendment was included to mollify the states who not surprisingly had different values, think slavery, and needed assurance that they could each have the right to independence in how they governed themselves at least where the other parts of the Constitution didn't dictate. While it's obvious that today's states still have very different values, the 10th amendment sews national discontent, conflict, division, even hatred and a whole lot of other adjectives with which I won't bore you.

So, what now has me hot and bothered about #10. As I'm certain that I've mentioned in previous columns, I subscribed to the ultra-conservative, (this refers to their Opinion section not the news section), Pasadena Star-News because I wanted to have a source of speakers for the Friday morning Progressive Discussion Group

which I'm hoping will be resurrected when and if Covid ever departs, but I digress.

Editorials, columns and op-eds in that opinion section have relentlessly attacked our state's penchant for what they consider to be over-regulating virtually all things that affect California business/commerce, causing corporations to flee the state - often to Texas who lures them away with their business-friendly hands-off approach.

To its credit, the Star-News publishes letters that are in opposition to their positions and last week published the 88th of mine, which pointed out that it was the 10th amendment that creates the disparity between the states and if we had a national set of business regulations this would not be a contentious issue. I also pointed out that this is a non-partisan issue in that those regulations wouldn't necessarily mirror those of California or Texas but rather would be decided by Congress and could always be amended by Congress as the need arises. I'm not naive and understand that today's Congress has a party with a majority in the House that is so split that while I have been writing this, has gone through 11 ballots without being able to pick a Speaker, and two parties that loathe each other even more.

There's a myriad of other current 10th amendment issues; not the least of which includes abortion rights or denial thereof, and California initiated rules that force, based on population and buying power, standards that affect the entire country. I'm referring to automobile fuel standards (fleet miles per gallon) and the treatment of animals raised to provide food. To be sure there are other Progressive states that follow our lead which ensures that businesses will adhere to our strictest standards rather than having to create different designs for each state. So there are compelling reasons for all states to both love and hate the 10th amendment. It just seems wrong to me that crossing state lines should subject one to different rules, after all we are supposedly the



yard buildings) in single-family zoned neighborhoods.

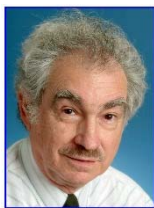
- Place a local real property transfer tax increase on the ballot.
- Conduct a comprehensive survey of all publicly owned land, including school district land and request proposals for properties that can be made available for affordable housing.
- Establish, not just investigate, safe parking solutions and tiny home sites in the City.
- Pass enabling legislation to make it more feasible and efficient for successful affordable housing development to occur.

~ Ed Washatka



## Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



**“Russian Roulette: The Inside Story  
or Putin’s War on America  
and the Election of Donald Trump”,  
by Michael Isikoff and David Corn.**

Michael Isikoff is an investigative journalist who has worked for the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, and *NBC News*. David Corn is a veteran journalist and political commentator; he is the Washington bureau chief for *Mother Jones* magazine and an analyst for MSNBC. These two notable journalists detail the history of Russia’s hackers and trolls, and how they spread a web of disinformation and affected the 2016 US presidential campaign. Much of the information in this book, about the Russian hacks of the DNC and Clinton campaign, about the connections between General Flynn and Paul Manafort with the Russians and with President Yanukovich, is fairly well

known. This book presents a coherent timeline and comprehensive details of the Russian campaign of disinformation and cyber warfare conducted by the Russians, from the time of the Clinton and G. W. Bush administrations, thru the Trump campaign and to the present day.

In February, 2013, General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of staff of the Russian Armed Forces, published an essay in the Russian newspaper *Military-Industrial Courier*, which defined a new doctrine (now called the Gerasimov Doctrine of Hybrid Warfare), advocating a new template for engaging in waging war, using political, economic, and informational warfare (non-combat) means. “Among such actions are the use of special-operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well as informational actions, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected,” the general wrote “The role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown; and in many cases they exceed the force of military weapons in their effectiveness.” *Russian Roulette* details how this new Russian warfare doctrine has been carried out, particularly during the 2016 presidential campaign in the US, but also in France (supporting La Pen) and elsewhere in Europe.

Two separate aspects of this new hybrid warfare are informational warfare (dispensing disinformation), and cyber warfare (computer hacking). Informational warfare is being carried out by the so-called Internet Research Agency (IRA) in Saint Petersburg (described also by Rachel Maddow in *Blowout*). The IRA does not, in fact, do research; rather the IRA employs hundreds of Russians who work 12-hour shifts, to create fake internet identities and plant stories in social media, with messages that promote President Putin and ridicule Russian opposition leaders, deride the European Union, and spread disinformation that is intended to aggravate social, racial and

political divisions. As an example, they sent hundreds of hate letters, purportedly from American white supremacist organizations, to African UN diplomats; and they attempted to exploit and aggravate the Black Lives Matter movement. Of course, their efforts included working to promote conspiracy theories and to stroke latent social, economic and racial fears. This cyber warfare was conducted by two Russian intelligence teams, which the FBI dubbed “Fancy Bear” and “Cozy Bear”. One of these hacked the DNC computers and extracted thousands of files; the other hacked the Clinton Campaign computers, including that of John Podesta. Thousands of files were turned over to Wikileaks, which released these files at critical times during the 2016 campaign, to damage Hillary Clinton.

Assassination also seems to be part of this hybrid warfare. This book details the poisoning in London of ex-KGB agent and Putin critic, Alexander Litvinenko, in November 2006, by radioactive Polonium-210. This case was investigated by British M-16 intelligence officer Christopher Steele (later known for the Steele dossier). And, two weeks before Litvinenko’s poisoning, his colleague, journalist Anna Politkovskaya, was shot to death outside her Moscow apartment. Both had collaborated in investigating human-rights abuses in Russia.

This book also describes the several attempts by Donald Trump to build a Trump hotel in Moscow. His first attempt, in 1996, did not go through. His next attempt was by teaming with Russian builder Aras Agalarov, an oligarch close to Putin. Agalarov had also been Trump’s partner in bringing the 2013 Miss Universe pageant to the Crocus Theater in Moscow, which Agalarov had built. That attempt fell through after the Obama administration’s sanctions brought an end to financing. Trump then in 2015 (while running for President) partnered with Russian born New York real estate developer, Felix Sater, with whom Trump had partnered to build the glitzy

Trump SoHo Hotel. Sater had served prison time for assault and had been involved in stock manipulations with mafia and Russian organized crime figures. Sater engaged Russian firm I.C. Expert Investment to do the construction on the Trump World Tower Moscow. This project, too, fell through.

Many aspects of the story covered in this book have been touched on by the books previously reviewed here: *Memoirs* by Michael McFaul and Marie Yovanovitch, *Blowout* by Rachel Maddow, *Peril* by Bob Woodward, *The Invention of Russia* by Ostrovsky, *Mr. Putin*, by Fiona Hill, *Ukraine’s Maidan* by Mychailo Wynnyckyj. But *Russian Roulette* brings together all the pieces on Putin’s cyber war in a concise narrative. In the complex story of Russia, Ukraine, and the Russian involvement in the 2016 Presidential election, no single book is adequate to tell the story: rather an ensemble of books with different perspectives is necessary to reconstruct the full picture.

~ Robert V Frampton



### **Banned Book**, *Continued from page six*

Holocaust. Some in the USA fly the Nazi flag yet in Germany it is illegal to own Nazi-era paraphernalia. Germans call it *Volksverhetzung* - incitement of the people. So American Nazis who admire the Germans are ironically out of step with the reality of mainstream German culture. So too are they missing out on the inclusion right here in their own country, living in the past and saying that the South really won the Revolutionary war, like their leader who still lives in the past saying he won the election.

It’s fine for them to express themselves, but when it is creating an onslaught of division and violence and fomenting a dictatorship, that’s when we have to stop it. See the book *How Democracies Die*, by Daniel Ziblatt. The Right can express themselves, yet their children, who are

protesting the banning of books are not being allowed to learn other sides of the story. The ACLU fights for the free-speech rights of Nazis, who forbid the free speech and information of others. Why is that?

~ Marcielle Brandler



## February *Phoenix* Deadline

The deadline for copy for the February *Phoenix* will be Monday, February 6. Send your items for publication to Sally Beer at [sally.beer125@gmail.com](mailto:sally.beer125@gmail.com) and Chuck Hains at [hains27@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hains27@sbcglobal.net). (Chuck will continue to contact regular contributors with a deadline reminder.)

## [ACTpasadena.org](http://ACTpasadena.org)

Check out our website. The *On-line Phoenix* is there and, even if you have already read the paper *Phoenix*, you will find the on-line version looks livelier in color and is in a different format. And we **may** have corrected a mistake or two we missed in the original *Phoenix*. Plus, a *Phoenix* archive is always available. Count on Website Manager Bruce Wright to keep adding items of interest. If you have suggestions, reach him at: [brucewright@sbcglobal.net](mailto:brucewright@sbcglobal.net).



## Calendar

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| January 21<br>Saturday<br>10 a.m. to<br>2 p.m. | 41st AD in person election, at UFCW Local 1428, 705 W. Arrow Hwy, Claremont. See details in Tim Wendler's item on the front page |
| January 30<br>Monday                           | UDH Steering Meeting via Zoom. 5:30 p.m.   |
| February 2<br>Thursday<br>7 p.m.               | ACT and ADC Meeting via Zoom. Program TBD. Socializing, 7 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.                                      |
| February 6<br>Monday                           | Phoenix deadline.  |



**ACT and ADC Membership Dues for 2023**

Hey, everybody, it's time to renew 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 or renew online at our website. (And thanks to those generous members who have already paid up. We love you!).



Please contact Executive Director Jon Fuhrman if you have any questions about your membership at [jon\\_fuhrman@outlook.com](mailto:jon_fuhrman@outlook.com) 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.