



The Official Publication of ACT

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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

The California Democratic Party State Convention

Don't Agonize, Organize!

The California Democratic Party State Convention takes place from May 25th to May 28th at the Marriott Los Angeles and at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Check out the Convention website at CDPCConvention.org.

CADEM is forever organizing around the issues that matter most. To build on its progress, CADEM must do so on a year-round basis and at every possible opportunity. There is no greater opportunity to harness the power of Democrats than at our statewide Convention. Join CADEM in May in Los Angeles to continue this essential organizing work!



Adam Schiff Fundraiser

There will be a fundraiser for Congressman Adam Schiff's Senate campaign on Sunday, April 30, at 3:30 p.m. at the home of Mary Urquhart in South Pasadena. To reserve tickets online, go to <https://tinyurl.com/3zzbvnc4>.

(Note: ACT and the Arroyo Democratic Club have not yet endorsed any candidate in the U.S. Senate race; this is a courtesy announcement for our membership.)

***Phoenix Policy:** Candidate or issue endorsement is granted only by a vote of the ACT and/or ADC membership. Notice of Democratic candidates' local events may appear in **the Phoenix** prior to endorsement balloting. Such appearance does not imply endorsement by either ACT or ADC.*

The Battle for Israel's Democracy:

A Zoom Call with Dov Waxman of UCLA

Prof. Dov Waxman, Professor of Israeli Studies at UCLA, will be leading a Zoom call on "The Battle for Israel's Democracy" on Sunday, April 23, at 10:30 a.m.

Dr. Waxman will discuss the Israeli government's judicial "reform" plan, the protests against it in Israel and the vocal criticism of it by many American Jews. He will also address what the judicial overhaul could mean for Israel's future and for the future relationship between American Jews and Israel.

The presentation is being sponsored by the Social

Justice Committee of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center.

To join the Zoom call, RSVP at

<https://www.pjtc.net/form/dovwaxman2023>.

The presentation is open to all members of the community.



Anita Pemstein

We are saddened by the March 30 death of ACT Charter member (and lifelong member,) Anita Pemstein, at age 83. Anita was always active and involved - including having served as an ACT Co-Chair. Her late husband, Walter, was a pharmacist and drug store owner. Anita supported that business and, after Walter's death, became a real estate agent and worked in real estate for many years.



Those who knew her, knew she always had a story to tell. Here is one we won't forget: some years ago, when she was visiting her college student son at his Oxy dorm, she was startled when a skinny kid, wrapped in a towel, ran by. "That's Barry," explained Anita's son. (Today we know that "Barry" as Barack Obama.)

We extend deepest sympathy to Anita's sons Jeffrey and Ira, to her daughter Stacy and to their spouses, Louise, Maria, and Matthew Knight, as well as four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Memorial Services were held at Mount Sinai Hollywood Hills on April 3. Shiva plans will be announced when they are available.



Your Photo in *The Phoenix*

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

Next ACT and ADC Meeting

Thursday, May 4, 7 p.m.



At the home of Fred and Jeanne Register
2438 Highland Avenue, Altadena

ACT's and the Arroyo Democratic Club's May meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4, 7 p.m., at 2438 Highland Avenue, in Altadena. The program will be announced at a later date.

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.

George Brumder will be the presiding Chair for ACT; Tim Wendler for ADC.



ACTpasadena.org

Please check out our website. The *On-line Phoenix* (in color) is there. The *On-line Phoenix* 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.



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.



by Jon Fuhrman

Tuesday, Apr. 11.

We've been wondering when the shoes would start dropping. Well, it's started. So far, it's only the bedroom slippers; the oxfords and army boots are still to come, but they won't be far behind. Some commentators criticized the timing of the New York indictment, arguing that what seem to be the stronger cases in Georgia or on the federal level should have been brought first. But that ignores the fact that each of these players – the DA's in New York, in Atlanta, and the US Special Counsel – are entirely independent of one another and should ignore what others do. Each should be driven solely by the merits and circumstances of their own case.

That's exactly what appears to be happening. Alvin Bragg, in New York, got all the testimony he needed and proceeded to ask his Grand Jury for an indictment. The actual vote of that Grand Jury has not been disclosed, but I suspect it was nigh onto unanimous. The Atlanta case seems more complicated, but only because it is broader in scope. It looks likely that Fani Willis will indict not just the former President, but also the 16 "fake electors" who signed papers purporting to be the true Electoral College electors and had those papers transmitted to Washington, as well as various attorneys who conspired to make that happen, including our friend Rudy Giuliani.

Finally, on the Federal level, Special Counsel Jack Smith is still in the process of getting former

Vice-President Pence's testimony. He probably doesn't really need it, but it would enormously powerful for a jury to hear from him how the President badgered him about unilaterally disqualifying the Electoral College votes of several states, despite all the legal advice that such a move was both unprecedented and without any legal justification. One appellate court has already ruled that Pence should testify, and the former Vice-President has indicated he will no longer challenge that ruling. Former President Trump, however, is now challenging it, but that attempted intervention is not likely to go very far. My guess is that by Memorial Day the former Vice-President will have testified, and I wouldn't be surprised if the federal indictments roll out in June, shortly after the Atlanta indictments. It will not be a happy spring time in Mar-a-Lago.

At the same time, we have had some stunning electoral success in Wisconsin. Janet Protasiewicz won election to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, flipping a 4-3 conservative majority into a 4-3 liberal majority, just in time to rule on the validity of Wisconsin's harsh anti-abortion statute enacted in 1849. Further, this election was not one of those cliffhangers that Wisconsin has become famous for, with Presidential candidates winning by 10,000 or 20,000 votes out of 3 million votes cast. Protasiewicz won by an impressive 10% points – 200,000 votes out of nearly 2 million votes cast. She racked up huge margins in Milwaukee and Madison, but also won some rural counties and lost most of the others by very modest margins. Ben Wickler, the chair of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, has a motto: lose by less, by which he means that Democrats need to do better in the rural areas, and prevent GOP candidates from racking up large margins that offset Democratic wins in the cities and suburbs. Protasiewicz did exactly that, and with her vote, the Court is likely to address both the abortion issue and also reapportionment / gerrymandering

in Wisconsin (which has led to the GOP having a nearly 2/3 margin in each house of the legislature, despite an electorate that is closely divided state-wide).

However, there are also two downsides to those results. There was, on the same ballot, a special election for an open State Senate seat, one the GOP has held for decades. The incumbent, Alberta Darling, resigned, likely for health reasons, after 25 years in the Legislature. She had been unopposed in 2012 and 2016, and won in 2020 by nearly 9%, despite Joe Biden carrying her suburban Milwaukee district by a few hundred votes. The GOP had exactly a 2/3 majority in the State Senate, so keeping her seat was of great importance to them.

But interest really heated up when the GOP candidate, State Assemblyman Dan Knodl, suggested he would vote to convict and oust Janet Protasiewicz should she win the Supreme Court seat and be impeached by the State Assembly. (He, incidentally, was one of about 20 Wisconsin legislators who signed a letter in 2020 urging the Legislature to appoint their own set of electors, due to the presumptive election fraud in the Presidential election.) His vote would give the GOP exactly the 2/3 margin they would need for that vote. Unfortunately, Knodl, the GOP candidate, won that election, albeit by only 1,500 votes, less than a 2% margin – a remarkably poor performance for the GOP in what was not considered a swing district.

The GOP does not have a 2/3 majority in the State Assembly, much to their annoyance, so they don't have enough votes to override gubernatorial vetoes. But an impeachment vote, which is akin to an indictment, requires only a majority vote, and the GOP has plenty of room to spare for that. So the State Assembly could well vote to

impeach and send the case for trial in the State Senate.

But even after preserving their 2/3 majority in the State Senate, a conviction is not a foregone conclusion. When the Legislature was urged to appoint an alternate slate of electors based on allegations of election fraud in 2020, there was a pretty chilly reception, their overwhelming GOP majorities notwithstanding. So there may be at least one, or several, Senators unwilling to boot Protasiewicz simply because, in her campaign, she was pretty open about her values and how they would lead her to vote on cases dealing with abortion and gerrymandering (which is part of the reason she won so handily). Even the State

Assembly might be uneasy impeaching her for "judicial misconduct" in the campaign and/or as a sitting lower court judge in Milwaukee based on how she sentenced various violent offenders (insufficiently harsh, in the conservative's viewpoint).

The second downside is that there were also three statewide ballot measures, all of which won by huge margins. Two dealt with what

factors judges may consider in setting bail. Traditionally, only flight risk should be considered -- will the person show up for trial. Two of those measures have now added language to the State Constitution allowing judges to consider the totality of circumstances -- the danger the defendant might pose to the community or witnesses, prior convictions, severity of the crime, gang affiliations -- all pet peeves of the conservative wing pushing to use fear of crime to win votes. Both measures passed by 2/3 margins. The third requires that any able-bodied single adult without children be required to work as a condition of receiving any state assistance -- another attempt by conservatives to hype their



mantra about people ripping off the welfare system and exploit cultural wedge issues. Well, it worked – this measure passed by nearly 80%.

So there remains a pretty conservative strain in the Wisconsin electorate. But it is fascinating how many voters must have voted for Janet Protasiewicz and then voted in favor of all three measures, suggesting that the reproductive choice issue can override an inherently conservative strain, but only if Democrats make a really substantial effort to do so. This was apparently the most expensive judicial race in American political history. The stakes were worth it, but it may have been Wisconsin's unique and odd timing of judicial elections that allowed the liberal community to focus on this race. In most other states with judicial elections, they are scheduled in November of even-numbered years, so they tend to get lost among the Presidential or Senatorial races around the country. Yet in states like North Carolina or Ohio the composition of the state high courts can be nearly as significant as in Wisconsin, and Democrats have been losing those races recently.

~ Jon Fuhrman



AltadenaWild Opposes a Proposed Sports Complex on Chaney Trail

AltadenaWild is circulating a petition to oppose plans by Nuccio nursery to sell land to Pasadena Polytechnic School who would build a sports complex on Chaney Trail in Altadena. The proposed complex would include a football/soccer/athletics stadium, a baseball stadium, and tennis courts.

The proposed site is east of the La Viña neighborhood, adjacent to the Angeles National Forest and located within a State-designated very high fire hazard severity zone.

AltadenaWild's petition states in part: "The



athletic facilities and the many hundreds of additional visitors crowding an already narrow and hilly access road will dramatically increase the risks to public safety. If approved, the sports complex will fundamentally change the semi-rural characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood, with impacts propagating throughout the Altadena foothills and the Angeles National Forest."

More information can be found on their website www.AltadenaWild.org, along with a petition.

~ Chuck Hains



Pasadena 2021-2029 Housing Element Approved

The City of Pasadena's latest revision to its Housing Element was certified in March by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The newly approved Element, which is required by state law to be included in the City's General Plan, will cover the years 2021- 2029.



The Housing Element identifies policies and programs to address existing and projected future housing needs. It includes analysis of the city's housing needs as well as providing for the tracking of the success of the housing policies in achieving the outlined goals and objectives.

As part of the process, a Regional Needs Housing Allocation (RHNA) was provided to cities throughout the State. Pasadena's allocation specifies the city must plan for over 9,000 units of new housing by October 2029, including 6,000

units for families with very low, low and moderate incomes.

The large number of housing units allocated to Pasadena came in response state's overwhelming housing crisis.

The Pasadena Affordable Housing Coalition (PAHC), of which ACT is a member, offered its oral and written comments to the City Council, the Mayor's Housing Task Force, and the HCD over the past two years as part of the City's outreach to solicit community participation.

The Coalition proposed 26 policy solutions focused in six areas including enabling ordinances to provide tenant protection solutions, updating zoning, creating sustainable funding sources, declaring housing as a human right to end homelessness, preserving existing affordable housing, and ensuring that low and moderate income housing is built throughout the city to achieve racially and economically integrated neighborhoods.

The group achieved limited success getting its recommendations into the final document.

The Coalition efforts aided the passage of Measure H which will help control rents and protect against unjust tenant evictions. We also organized to get the city to pass an ordinance for rezoning neighborhoods to permit the building of affordable housing on church land

Some of the recommended solutions that failed to get into the document were creating a housing bond fund, and passing a vacancy tax and/or a property transfer tax like that recently passed in LA. Even if implemented faithfully, it will be a challenge for the City to meet its housing goals by 2029 without additional sustainable funding sources.

Regardless, the final draft of the Housing Element has been certified and the Coalition's objective to organize the community to provide input has been completed. As a result, the ACT

Steering Committee unanimously passed a motion to withdraw from further participation in the Coalition.

~ Ed Washatka



UDH Update



The UDH continues to be active during this pre-election year. As you might imagine, there is a lot going on around the nation and the UDH is an active participant. In just the past two months, we have stood up for Representative Judy Chu after a racist attack from a Texas Republican who questioned her loyalty to America, we have worked the phones to elect a liberal Supreme Court Justice in Wisconsin to flip that conservative court, and we have joined with the DNC and other organizations to oppose the outrageous decision of a Texas court to ban abortion medication. 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.

I would also like to add a personal note as a former PCC Trustee. Many of you may have already heard about the turmoil surrounding the PCC Board and its efforts to fire the Superintendent/President, who has been an outstanding leader and a national figure in the LGBTQ community. Campus organizations have denounced the many failures of the Board, including serious allegations of racist attitudes, as well as violations of college bylaws and state educational regulations that could place PCC's accreditation in jeopardy once again. Although it is solely my opinion as a former PCC Trustee and does not reflect the views of the UDH or any other organization, I fear that PCC will face another era of an instability and even loss of accreditation as a result of the Board's actions.

See **UDH**, continued on page fourteen

Welcome New and Returning ACT Members:

Suzanne Barber, Pasadena
Katie Dempster, South Pasadena
Katherine Gabel & Eunice Shatz, Pasadena

Special Thanks to Patrons

Elizabeth Blue
Bill & Claire Bogaard
Katie Dempster
Andrea Gordon
Jim Haight
Jim & Virginia Heringer
Elaine Jones & Donald Lomas
Dorothy Matthiessen
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Dianne Philibosian & Tom Seifert
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Michael & Tammy Silver
Bonnie Skolnik
R. Rhodes Stephenson & Hanne Bauer
Edie Taylor
Laura Treister
Odessa Walker
Tanya Williams-Benzinger
Neal Wrightson & Laurie Taylor

Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Joan & Andreas Aebi
Bill & Claire Bogaard
William & Edith Byerly
Sharon Dooner
David Fertig & Louisa Simpson
Andrea Gordon
John & Virginia Kimball
Carol Liu & Michael Peevey
Robin McCarthy
Eddie Newman
Connie O'Donnell
Joseph Sadove & Jenny Genin
R. Rhodes Stephenson & Hanne Bauer
Emily Stork
Sam Teaford & Lynne Appel
Edie Taylor
Neal Wrightson & Laurie Taylor

Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Political Account

Bill & Claire Bogaard
Pixie Boyden
Mel & Renate Cohen
Andrea Gordon
Jim & Virginia Heringer
Eddie Newman
Connie O'Donnell
Fred & Jeanne Register
R. Rhodes Stephenson & Hanne Bauer
Emily Stork
Edie Taylor
Odessa Walker
Tim & Joanne Wendler

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



Dear ACT members,

There have been more mass shootings in the month of April than days thus far. That's just outrageous, sad, and preventable. Other countries have distressed people, harsh personal situations, trauma, troubles, and heartache, but they don't have the same incidences of mass shootings as the US. They also don't have the ease and access to weapons of mass destruction and millions of violent weapons in circulation. Strong gun laws work, and we need them passed and signed into law on the National level.

This year, I am the author of SB 2 on behalf of Governor Newsom and Attorney General Bonta. It will bring California's concealed carry permitting in line with the Supreme Court's recent actions. It is the highest profile gun safety bill this legislative session and needs to pass and bring common sense and uniformity to the gun permitting process across each county. When signed, no longer will different sheriffs be able to use personal discretion on who should or shouldn't carry a gun. It will also expand the list of prohibited places for people who are granted permits. For example, you don't need a gun to attend your daughter's AYSO soccer match or a game at Dodger Stadium.

In addition, I'm carrying a bill to end the automatic issuing of a person's gun license rights just based on time. If a person is on a 10-year prohibition list, it doesn't mean they are no longer a threat with the expiration of time. We should have a reevaluation process before a person is granted back gun ownership rights. It also

prohibits gun stores from using raffles to attract new customers and requires them to retake a person's gun if that gun owner wants to turn in their weapon.

And with the assault on teachers and teaching, I have a bill this year to protect teachers from harassment just for teaching subject matter that some people disagree with. The idea for the bill was brought to me by teachers in Glendale who felt at risk.

The campaign for Congress is going well. Thank you to the many ACT members who have stepped up and helped me so far. Because of you, we reached our first quarter goal and are on our way to a terrific start. Bella is a thriving college junior, Sofia is working successfully in entertainment, and Ellen is still going strong. From all of us, we hope you had a wonderful Easter, Passover, and Ramadan.

~ 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.



Please share your email address with ACT Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com (that's jon underscore fuhrman) or leave a message on ACT's answerphone, 626 795-2798.

**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

It has been a busy legislative session in Sacramento with the bill introductions coming to an end in February. I am pleased to announce that I have a robust legislative package of 22 bills addressing the areas of health, the environment, education, public safety and labor.

I introduced AB 280, the California Mandela Act on Solitary Confinement. This legislation is a reintroduction of last year's bill, AB 2632, a measure that sought comprehensive reform on the issue of solitary confinement in jails, prisons and private detention facilities. AB 280 would protect the designated populations from ever being placed in solitary confinement including pregnant people, the elderly and those with certain disabilities. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people are in solitary confinement throughout the United States, and numerous states have introduced legislation seeking to limit the practice. The reintroduced version of the Mandela Act includes specific language that addresses concerns raised by the opposition, and is designed to set minimum standards for facilities that should not conflict with higher regulations introduced by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

In the area of education, I introduced AB 610, relating to student transit passes. This bill would create the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program to fund the development and implementation of fare-free transit passes to California students. Inspired by my previous efforts of AB 1919 from 2022, AB 610 would enable transit agencies to

apply for grants to create fare-free transit passes accessible to students within a transit provider's locality. Additionally, the bill specifies a report must be submitted to the Legislature to assess whether the program increases transit ridership among student users, how many have created or expanded a transit pass program, and would provide recommendations to expand transit pass programs in the future. I am proud to be collaborating with supporters to advance this measure such as Move LA, Pasadena City College and Citrus College

In celebration of Black History Month, the California Legislative Black Caucus gave each Member an opportunity to highlight two entities to recognize at the Capitol for their accomplishments in contributing to the racial divide. I had the pleasure of recognizing Mrs. Ann Hamilton and Rosberg Inc. as my Black-owned business of the year in partnership with the California Black Chamber of Commerce for her contributions to our state's economy of creating jobs and closing the racial wealth gap through uplifting local communities. In 1981, Ann opened a 6-bed facility in Altadena for children (ages 7-21) who exhibited maladaptive behaviors. Forty years later, Ann has taken her passion to serve others and opened additional supported, community-based residential adult facilities in the Pasadena, Altadena, Glendale and Burbank area. These facilities provide 24-hour long-term care for residents while help maintaining their independence and dignity, aided with their personal care, mobility, and other needs.

The second honoree was San Dimas resident and Monrovia High School alumnus, Mr. Ronald "Ron" Husband as the 41st Assembly District 2023 Unsung Hero. The California Legislative Black Caucus established the Black History Month Unsung Hero Award to recognize individuals who have contributed selflessly to their respective districts. An Unsung Hero is defined as

a person who makes a substantive yet unrecognized contribution. Ron is a 38-year veteran of the Walt Disney Company and is the first African American animator and the first African American supervising animator for Walt Disney Studios. His animation screen credits from Walt Disney Feature Animation include: The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, and The Lion King. Ron is an example of perseverance and persistence – by doing what you love and offering a seat at the table to people who did not think that was possible.

In March, as part of the annual recognition of Women's History Month in the State Capitol, I had the honor to recognize Dr. Devorah Lieberman as the 41st Assembly District's Woman of the Year. Dr. Lieberman is the University of La Verne's first female president and brings more than three decades of higher education experience, scholarship, and leadership to the institution. Among her accomplishments are raising \$128 million in the largest comprehensive campaign in the university's history. Given that our office received over 100 nominations, I wanted to also recognize other women for their commitment to excellence and service to the San Gabriel Valley and the people who call it home. Therefore, I also selected Women of Distinction from each city that include: Veronica Jones, Town Council Member (Altadena), Terry Grill, Director of Sustainability for Sealed Air Corporation (Claremont), Caroline Que Anderson, LCF School Board Member (La Cañada Flintridge), Cynthia Cannady, Attorney and Climate Advocate (Pasadena), Lois Gaston, Community Advocate (Monrovia), Jennifer Oglesby, Founder Community Services of America, (Rancho Cucamonga), Kris Boneman, Director of Educational Tech for Bonita Unified School District (San Dimas), Julie Bencosme, Small Business Owner & Community Volunteer (Sierra Madre), Linda Clinton, Community Volunteer (Upland), and Desirea Haggard, Director of Environmental

Affairs at CalPortland (Pinon Hills). The 2023 Women of Distinction are dedicated leaders who improve the lives for thousands of individuals and families in the 41st Assembly District and beyond.

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

Sincerely,

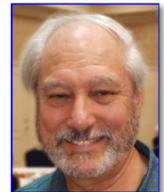
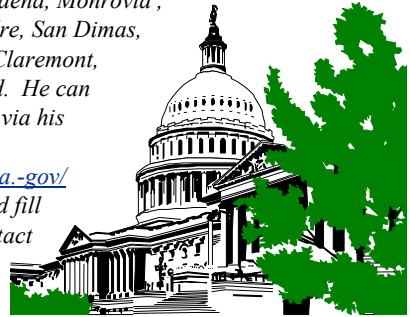
~ Chris R. Holden

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 contact form.



My Two Cents

By Ron Garber

Full disclosure: while 'artificial intelligence' did NOT write this column, it may or may not have aided in its completion. That depends on whether or not you consider my Amazon Dot Alexa, Spellcheck and whatever the punctuation correction is called to be AI. I asked Alexa if she considers herself to be Artificial Intelligence and her response was, to me, a nonsensical rambling about comparing herself to the Aurora Borealis being photons in the sky. I think she's trying to obfuscate* the issue so I will continue to seek out her assistance. Yeah, I know I'm treating her as if she's a real person. I'm getting old and 'perfect'

situational words that used to automatically come to me, now achingly elude me. My retrieval system is to use Alexa like a thesaurus to deliver that word as a synonym* or antonym to another word that while adequate, is just not as satisfying. I also use Alexa like a dictionary to produce a definition of a word to assure that I'm using it properly, so I don't appear to be the idiot that I may be. To that end, for the rest of this column only, I will place an asterisk* after any word that I have received assistance to produce.



Several very recent actions and trends have the 2024 election cycle shaping up as potentially promising for Democratic (big D) prospects*. A federal judge with a history of being against women's reproductive rights has ruled that the FDA did not go through the proper procedures 20 years ago, before approving one of the two pills that are used together to provide non-surgical abortions. While this was litigated in Texas it will be appealed probably all the way to the Supreme Court and would then affect all the states, even the ones that are completely pro-choice. Reproductive rights have proven to be the 'mother' {pun intended,} wedge issue of the 2022 and 2024 election cycles and the one that has and will go over big in the all-important swing states.

Republicans with only a five-seat majority in the House are having a nightmare of a time coming to a consensus with a plan that balances the budget within ten years because Trump has stated that he would not support cutting Social Security or Medicare. When combining those two programs with Defense and interest on the national debt, that leaves only 15% remaining with which to work. The only way it could be accomplished would be to raise taxes, a non-starter for Republicans. Speaker McCarthy promised to achieve this goal in order to secure the Speakership and while there are more than enough in the caucus

who would be happy to see him fail, the goal is unachievable regardless of who might replace him. At this time the Democrats need to do nothing and watch their opponents self-destruct while trying to deliver on a plan that is impossible to do, because of the constraints they've placed on themselves.

Both COVID and inflation appear to be abating* with the appearance of a soft landing rather than the recession* that had been predicted. Current Presidents don't necessarily deserve either the credit or the blame for changes in the economy because what brings this about is almost always beyond their control. However, they have to live with it and frame the circumstances into their campaigning.

A healthy majority of American voters want us to continue to support Ukraine in its heroic war against Putin while many, not all, Republicans appear to favor Putin. An even larger majority of Americans want background checks for gun ownership and a ban on assault weapons, both Democratic positions; while Republicans oppose both and are working to ease any current legal constraints like requiring a permit to carry a concealed handgun and allowing open carry virtually anywhere.



As far as I can tell, Republicans are pinning their hopes on a decisive issue that they believe balances in their favor. They've declared legislative war against those who are trans-gender or wrongly gendered, be it in sports, bathroom use or medically helping youth who, are at risk of harming themselves if denied that assistance. While the Republican position is wrong it may prove to be popular, but I don't believe it will make a dent against what the Democrats have going for them.

The final thing that Democrats have going for them is that Trump is much more divisive to Republicans than President Biden is to the Dems .

The election is a long way off and everything is subject to change at a moment's notice, but a snapshot of today looks good.



Challenge!!! At last week's ACT/ADC Steering Committee meeting it was pointed out that the vast majority of the articles appearing in this periodical are written by men and not enough by women. While, knowing the two fine publishers of this journal*, I'm certain that that's the way it falls out and is not by design, but the assessment* is duly noted and I hope this acknowledgement encourages any women who have proceeded this far into my column to start penning an essay*, story* or column* for the next and any subsequent 'phoenixes*.' For the record, I don't capitalize phoenix, not because I'm showing disrespect, but rather the opposite, as it's not capitalized on the 'masthead*.'

This is not the first time I've spoken out for the rights of those who are not the same gender as me. Forty-five years ago, I was a union appointed representative on the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee for the Los Angeles District of the Internal Revenue Service. Six members were appointed by each of the six chapters representing the six offices in the district, and six were either filled by the six division chiefs or their appointees who were senior managers. At the end of a meeting, I looked around and noticed that most of the members were white males and mentioned it to the group. A few days later the President of my chapter pulled me aside to tell me that he had heard what I said and that he agreed with my position and immediately replaced me with a woman of color. Being replaced did not upset me but rather amused me. While I believe that there is plenty of room in 'the phoenix' for a myriad of articles by women, if Sally and Chuck were to use this as an excuse to replace someone who throws asterisks

around like piñata candy I would again be amused and not at all upset.

~ Ron out !!!



Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



“It's OK To Be Angry About Capitalism” by Senator Bernie Sanders

Bernie Sanders' book, *It's OK To Be Angry About Capitalism*, is, thematically, an extension of *Davos Man*, which I reviewed previously. *Davos Man* is a study of how the increasing inequity in income and wealth has come about. That book follows several members of the billionaire class: Mark Benioff, CEO of Salesforce; Steve Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone; Jack Ma, co-founder of Alibaba; Gianni Agnelli, CEO of Fiat; Larry Fink, CEO of Blackrock; Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon; and Jamie Dimon, CEO at JP Morgan Chase. And, while *Davos Man* explores this theme on a global basis (its subtitle is *How the Billionaires Devoured the World*), Sanders' book focuses on the United States.

The Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite countries had a controlled economy and central planning. This led to an oligarchy, as discussed by Yugoslav Vice President Milovan Djilas in his book, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, in 1982. The communist party apparatchiks became the new ruling class. Once considered Marshall Tito's heir apparent, Djilas was imprisoned after publication of this book. The development of oligarchy in Russia under Yeltsin and then Putin is documented in a new book, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* by Ohio State University professor Karen

Dawisha, which delves into the intrigue of Putin's takeover of Russia and the distribution of state industries to the oligarchs. Sanders describes a parallel transformation in the United States. Sanders points out a RAND Corporation study that found that "over the past forty-seven years, \$50 trillion in wealth [in the US] has been redistributed from the bottom 90 percent to the top one percent – primarily because an ever-increasing percentage of corporate profits has been flowing into stock portfolios of the investor class" through stock buybacks, use of depreciation deductions, and the low tax rate on capital gains.

Sanders in this book is, surprisingly, not attacking capitalism *per se*, but rather what he terms "uber-capitalism", manifested by the development of monopolies, unequal and regressive taxation, and the rise of oligarchy in the United States. The prefix "uber" comes from the German *über*, which means "over" or "above". In the book, Sanders rarely uses the term capitalism without this prefix. The basic tenets of capitalism as we know them today were spelled out clearly by Adam Smith: supply and demand, division of labor, pursuit of self-interest. Sanders is not arguing against these features of capitalism -- but rather, the distortion of supply and demand through imposition of a controlled economy. Oligarchies are monopolistic economies that suppress supply and demand mechanisms; and the oligarchy is sustained by a regressive tax system that transfers wealth from the lower class to the oligarchs. Even though he terms himself a democratic socialist, Sanders is also not advocating socialism as an antidote to uber-capitalism, at least not in the form that was developed by Eduard Bernstein, the father of the Weimar Republic. A biography of Eduard Bernstein and description of "democratic socialism" as it evolved from the concepts of Fredrich Engels, is discussed in Peter Gay's Book, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*

(1952). Democratic Socialism involves the public ownership of the means of production, including industrial factories, railroads, utilities, etc. This is not what Sanders is advocating in this book. As the CNN book review put it: "Rather than making the case for a Democratic Socialist government, Sanders appears to want a reform of American capitalism and to see the country embrace a kind of New Deal liberalism." Among the solutions that Sanders advocates are: Get excessive corporate money out of politics by overturning the Buckley vs Valeo decision; Guarantee voting rights and fight against voter suppression; Revitalize American media thru more public financing and anti-trust cases; Strengthening Civil Rights laws; Strengthening Unions; Health care as a Human right; Regulation of the pharmaceutical industry.

Sanders makes many references to Norway: its health system, education system, tax system, etc. For him, Norway is a modern model, just as FDR's New Deal is a historical model. Sanders discusses the monopolization of the broadcast media, the disappearance of small-town local newspapers, the expensive yet dysfunctional health system and the regressive tax system in the United States, and compares these to democratic and functional systems in Norway and other European countries.

And, like Stacy Abrams, he advocates a vigorous grass-roots organizing effort, not just for election of progressive democratic candidates, but also to achieve progressive economic objectives that would counter the "uber" style oligarchy and restore a more democratic system.

Next Month: To follow up on the theme of Bernie Sanders' book and of *Davos Man*, I will continue with an economic analysis of the US tax system in two books. First, *The Triumph of Injustice: How the Rich Dodge Taxes and How to Make them Pay*, by Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zuckan, who are professors of economics at UC

Berkeley; and a review of *People, Power, and Profits: Progressive Capitalism for the Age of Discontent*, by Prof. Joseph Stiglitz, of Columbia University, which provides an account of the dangers of unfettered markets and monied politics. Prof. 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.

~ Robert V Frampton



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I sincerely hope that the PCC Board, the campus community and the broader Pasadena citizenry will do everything that is necessary to restore a modicum of stability and responsibility to the college. Perhaps by the time the Phoenix goes to press, some semblance of rational leadership will have been restored. I certainly hope so.

~ Hoyt Hillsman



Apr May Calendar

- April 23
Sunday
10:30 a.m. – “The Battle for Israel’s Democracy.” with Dov Waxman via Zoom sponsored by the Social
12:30 p.m. Justice Committee of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center.
- April 24
Monday
UDH Steering Meeting via Zoom. 5:30 p.m.
- April 30
Sunday
3 & 3:30 pm Adam Schiff Fundraiser at the home of Mary Urquhart in South Pasadena.
- May 4
Thursday
7 p.m. ACT and ADC Meeting at the home of Fred and Jeanne Register, 2438 Highland Ave., Altadena. Socializing, 7 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
- May 8
Phoenix deadline. Monday
- May 25-28
Thursday-Sunday
California Democratic State Convention at the Marriott Los Angeles and the LA Convention Center.
Info at CDPCConvention.org.
- July 20**
Thursday
6:30 p.m. **SAVE THE DATE:** Our Summer Potluck Meeting will feature LA District Attorney George Gascon as our special guest speaker. Potluck details and location to follow.



May Phoenix Deadline

The copy deadline for the May Phoenix will be Monday, May 8. 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.)

ACT and ADC Membership Dues for 2023

It is 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 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.