



Active Democrat

General Meeting – March 9, 2011

Election Reform Workshop with Kevin McKeown and Frances Talbott-White



President's Message:

In the United States, we like to call ourselves a Democratic-Republic. It makes us feel good to elevate our system of government above those of

For far too long, we as a country, and Culver City in particular, have called ourselves a democracy when our electoral institutions do not quite meet all of those criteria. Culver City elections are winner-take-all, providing minority factions within the community (even those that are substantial) with no representation. Culver City elections are at large, meaning that different communities with different demographics and beliefs have no individual electoral power and must compete throughout the city. And Culver City elections are held at times when there are no other issues on the ballot, leading to substantial voter fatigue, confusion, and ridiculously low turnout (as low as 10%).

If we are going to continue calling ourselves a democracy, then it is high time that we reform the system to better represent the variety of political views of those who live in our city. We begin this process at our next membership meeting on Wednesday, March 9th. We will have a panel of experts, including Santa Monica City Councilmember Kevin (see **President**, Page 2)

the rest of the world. We like to think that the people have the political decision-making power and have for over 220 years. However, one of the first things that I teach my students is that democracy does not just mean letting people vote. In order to have a real democracy, you must have protections for minorities so that the majority opinion does not become repressive. In order to have a real democracy, you must have civil liberties built into your government and protected so that individual rights are not trampled. And in order to have a real democracy, you must have an electoral system that provides real choice to the voters, legitimate participation, and a system of results that accurately represents what the voters intended.

Monthly General Membership Meeting:
**7:00 PM Wednesday,
March 9, 2011**
6:45 PM – Refreshments
Rotunda Room
Veterans Memorial Building
4117 Overland Avenue
Corner of Overland Ave. and
Culver Blvd.

What's Inside?

President's Message (continued)
- Page 2

**First Club "Happy Hour" a
Success** - Page 2

**Wisconsin's Problem - Voter
Turnout** - Page 2

Di's Corner - Page 2

**Public Employees Must Be
Respected** - Page 3

Club Notes

Renew your membership!
Please use the form on page 4 to supply your renewal information.

Electronic Newsletter:
Submit your email address to Info@CCDemClub.org and ask to get the newsletter by email!
Save a tree and save our club the postage!

Join the Culver City Peace Vigil: Show your support for ending the war in Afghanistan every other Friday 5:30 – 6:30 PM across from the Culver Hotel.

Community College Board Endorsements

Seat 1: Mona Field Seat 3: Steven Veres
Seat 5: No Endorsement* Seat 7: Miguel Santiago

*60% of ballots were required for endorsement

Vote Tuesday, March 8

Comments expressed in the Newsletter are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the Culver City Democratic Club.

Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk

Ronnie Jayne will be walking/jogging the LA Marathon on March 20. You can encourage Ronnie and help our Club at the same time by pledging \$\$'s to the Club for every mile she walks. The marathon is 26.2 miles long. To donate, please call Ronnie at 310-836-7557 or email her at Ronniejayn@aol.com.

(President from Page 1)

McKeown and election reform expert Frances Talbott-White, to help us better understand three potential reforms for our local elections:

- Consolidating local elections so that they are held on a date when more residents are already voting for statewide and/or national offices
- Voting by district, in observance of the California Voting Rights Act, so that each community has its own local representation and
- Using Instant Runoff Voting where voters rank candidates

rather than only voting for one, ensuring that the candidate with majority support actually wins the election.

However, this is no ordinary Culver City Democratic Club meeting where we bring in expert speakers and leave at the end better educated as a group, but with no definitive change to the community. After we hear briefly from our experts, we will divide into three working groups where we will begin to create a proposed policy that will then be delivered to our city council and school board laying out a plan to make our local elections more democratic and fair. We are putting you to work, but it is for a good cause. As long as we maintain the status quo in terms of electing our representatives, we can never expect real change to occur.

The time for change is now. We are all watching as people within the middle east are risking life and freedom for the opportunity to vote and produce a more open government. We are all watching as

our union friends in Wisconsin are feeling the effects of an election that did not produce the right Governor. The time for complacency has passed. We must follow the lead of the Egyptian and Libyan protesters and learn the lessons from an election gone wrong in Wisconsin and begin the process of reforming our local system here in Culver City right now.

First Club "Happy Hour" A Success

On Friday, February 25th, the Culver City Democratic Club held our first Happy Hour at Kay n' Dave's Cantina in Downtown Culver City. With 25 members and prospective members in attendance (including 9 who were at their first CCDC event), it was incredibly successful. People talked about politics, enjoyed good food and drinks, and encouraged prospective members to join the club. Thanks to all who helped plan and publicize. If you have ideas for how to make our next happy hour even better, please send them to president@ccdemclub.org.

Wisconsin's Problem - Voter Turnout

by Brian Pogue

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

This is the first quote I put up when the CCDC updated it's website a few years ago (I quickly added the other one by John Wooden). And it is as true today as it was back in the 1700's (and probably throughout the history of humankind). The workers of the State of Wisconsin (and possibly soon many others) are reeling under the potential changes in how the state treats them. It will be not just a dark day but a dark age if their governor is able to change the laws regarding how they negotiate the terms of their work. But this could have been avoided if the Democrats had won the governor's seat.

It seems as though the Democrats in (see **Wisconsin**, Page 3)

Di's Corner: By Diane Rosenberg

On Saturday February 12, 2011 the Culver City Democratic Club held its annual installation luncheon at "Courtyard by Marriott" here in Culver City.

The Mistress of Ceremonies was outgoing Pres. Ronnie Jayne who did a fantastic job. The luncheon went like clockwork. Everything was perfect during the whole affair.

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas installed the new board: Pres. Karlo Silbiger, 1st. V.P. Bill Wynn, 2nd. V.P. Meghan Sahli-Wells, Rec. Sec. Sylvia Moore, Corresponding Sec. Mollie "Lee" Welinsky, Treasurer Eric Fine and Membership Chair Diane Rosenberg. James Westbrook from Senator Curren Price's office gave each of the 2010 outgoing board certificates of appreciation.

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas was the recipient for "The Elected Leader of The Year Award for 2010"

Before "The Trudy Cherness Democrat of the Year Award" was given posthumously to Sally Gardner two of her friends Janet Hoult and Susan Anderson gave a speech about her. Sally's daughter Katie came in from Vancouver to accept the award.

The club congratulates incoming Pres. Karlo Silbiger for the excellent speech he gave at the luncheon. He just about covered everything he wants to see and do for the club during the coming year.

(Wisconsin from Page 2)

Wisconsin (and elsewhere) didn't see this coming. But the drums were beating throughout the country, both by the media and the Republicans/Tea Party. I kept hearing how, following a presidential election where one party wins, the following election period (2 years hence) typically results in a major increase for the other party. And 2010 was no different. The "far right" (i.e. Koch brothers, etc.) were ready to pounce on the opportunity, especially in state races (they are working on Congress as well). And so here we are fighting for the basic rights that we believed were beyond reproach. The Republicans know differently, and that's why they have kept pounding away with their message and actions to get our great country to revert to archaic labor and privacy laws (i.e. none). They have started back in on their "social" agenda as well, trying to change any law possible that can thwart a woman's right to an abortion, even access to healthcare in general (and changing the definition of rape?).

One Progressive stated that the "...difference between 2008 (Obama wins with 56 percent) and 2010 (seeming shift to right) was voter turn-out. 70 percent turned out in 2008; barely fifty percent in 2010. The decline was even more pronounced in student areas. The state Democratic Party did not inspire young people..." From the election results, their new Governor, Scott Walker, only won by 123,151 votes (52% to 47%), and Russ Feingold lost to Ron Johnson by only a little over 104,000 votes.

Now is the time that we must stand up and reassert ourselves for what is right and fair. Not later, or there will be no later. Workers, especially those in unions, are protesting throughout the country. We must all get out and show those in power (i.e. the elected and wealthy) that we will not take these attempted changes lying down. Half of the voters were lying down on the job when it was time to vote. We need everyone up on their feet to fight back this tyranny or we will have no cause for complaining later

Public Employees Must be Respected

by Sylvia Moore

All my life, I've known people who have worked in the public sector. My mother is a retired public health nurse. My grandmother was a cook for the United States Navy. Two very good friends and a cousin are public school teachers. A family friend is also a teacher and her husband is a police officer. Another cousin is a probation officer and his wife is an emergency dispatcher. This is just a partial list.

The current assault on public sector employees and the unions who represent them is nothing less than disgusting and shameful. I am especially offended at the horrible treatment and disrespect school teachers have received from certain lawmakers and from people in the media. We all know where this contempt comes from: a desire to dismantle the public sector entirely, turn our country over to corporate predators, and turn America into a two-class society. But ordinary Americans shouldn't buy into this garbage.

The protests that have been underway in the Midwest against Republican-led efforts to abolish public employee unions, are so inspiring. This is a movement that needs to spread all across the country.

It's infuriating to hear other Americans belittle the work that public employees do, and tell lies about what they make. How could people be so ungrateful as to go around using public services (like roads) and take public benefits (like Medicare), and then turn around and spit at those who provide these services? They must be shamed for having such views.

Public employees make our society run. Public employees make it possible for Americans to live in a pleasant environment. They fill our potholes and fix our roads. They clean our streets and highways. They pick up our garbage and monitor our sewage systems. They rescue us in emergencies. They keep our

communities safe. They make sure our food is safe to eat. They prepare our children to become productive citizens. They care for our sick and aged. They make sure the elderly and disabled get their Social Security checks on time. They deliver our mail. Public employees do the work that the private sector can't or won't do.

These people do important work, and they should be well compensated and respected by all Americans. Public employees in other western democracies are not disparaged as they are in America. French public servant positions are highly sought after. Japanese teachers are revered. The Brits adore their National Health Service. It's high time Americans give our public employees the same honor.

What's frustrating and tragic is that some of the venom being hurled toward public employees is coming from average Americans who themselves are probably toiling at low-wage, private sector jobs. They're stewing in a sea of jealousy -- resentful of the kind of benefits and job security public employees receive. Instead, they should be joining with public workers in a fight against the real people who stole our prosperity: the rich plutocrats and the politicians who do their bidding.

2011 Club Officers and Committee

Chairs:

President: Karlo Silbiger

President@CCDemClub.Org

First Vice President: Bill Wynn

FirstVP@CCDemClub.Org

Second VP: Meghan Sahli-Wells

SecondVP@CCDemClub.Org

Treasurer: Eric Fine

Treasurer@CCDemClub.Org

Recording Secretary: Sylvia

Moore

Corresponding Secretary: Lee

Welinsky

Membership Secretary: Diane

Rosenberg

Web Editor: Brian Pogue

Webmaster@CCDemClub.Org

Newsletter: Greg Valtierra

Renew your membership!

Now collecting dues for 2011.
Dues for 2011 are due by
January 1, 2011. Current
dues must be paid by
renewing members before a
vote to get a ballot at the
general meeting. New and
lapsed members must have
paid dues at least 25 days in
advance to vote at a meeting.

Culver City Democratic Club
P.O. Box 4254
Culver City, CA 90231-4254

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 517

March 9, 2011 - Meeting Program:

**Election Reform Workshop
with Kevin McKeown and
Frances Talbott-White**

Upcoming Events

► **Tuesday, March 8**

**Community College Board
Election**

Please see our endorsements on
page 1 or refer to our
endorsement mailer. Don't forget
to vote and be sure to bring a
friend or neighbor to vote as well!

► **Wednesday, March 9**

**Monthly General Meeting:
Election Reform Workshop**

7:00 PM at the Rotunda Room,
Veterans Memorial Building.
Public is welcome. Call Karlo at
(310) 202-7255 or email
President@CCDemClub.Org

► **Saturday, March 19**

Monthly Board Meeting

9:00 AM at the Rosenberg's home.
All members welcome. Call Bill
at (310) 253-9046 or email
FirstVP@CCDemClub.Org

► **Wednesday, April 13**

Monthly General Meeting

7:00 PM at the Rotunda Room,
Veterans Memorial Building.
Public is welcome. Call Karlo at
(310) 202-7255 or email
President@CCDemClub.Org

Culver City Democratic Club
Application/Renewal Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

I declare that all the individuals listed for membership are registered Democrats.

Signed: _____

Membership Dues: Dues may be waived for financial hardship

Member \$30

Student \$20

Supporting Member \$75

Sustaining Member \$125

Additional Contribution: \$_____

Please make your check payable to:

Culver City Democratic Club

P.O. Box 4254, Culver City, CA 90231-4254

For questions please call Membership Secretary Diane Rosenberg at
(310) 398-5328

Please renew for 2011 if you haven't already done so.

The dues period runs concurrent to the calendar year.

Renewals are due by January 1, of each year.