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Post Office Box 4254 • 6695 Green Valley Circle Culver City, CA 90230

General Meeting on Zoom — 7p.m. Wednesday, May 10, 2023

“Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable”

Author Joanna Schwartz will speak

President’s Message by Jeff Schwartz

The First White Mayor of Culver City

Dear Members and Supporters,
In October 2017, Ta-Nehisi Coates published an essay entitled [“The First White President”](#) in The Atlantic. Obviously, his claim was not that every US President before Barack Obama was not white. Instead, it was that Donald Trump was the first white President because he was the first one elected specifically because he was white. For Obama’s predecessors, whiteness was a tacit requirement, along with being heterosexual, cisgender, Christian, and male. For Trump, however, his whiteness was primary.

Coates argues that what made Trump so meaningful as a refutation of Obama was that he was a complete degenerate and failure. There was no doubt before the 2016 election that [Trump had a record of infidelity and had bought several women’s silence](#), that he was [the least successful businessperson](#) in American history, [and so on](#). Replacing Obama with a relatively clever and articulate white reactionary, such as Rick Santorum or Mike Huckabee, would not have

made as strong a statement as replacing him with the least qualified one available. As [Charles Blow put it](#), Trump’s election was a spectacular manifestation of Lyndon Johnson’s explanation of racism as a political strategy: “If you can convince the lowest white man he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice you’re picking his pocket.” The greater the contrast between the sleazy, ugly, ignorant, and incompetent Trump and the decent, charming, brilliant, and effective Obama, the more powerful he was as a symbol of white supremacy.

Daniel Lee would reject a comparison to Obama. When Lee became Culver City’s first Black City Council Member in 2018, he downplayed the historical significance of his election, emphasizing that he represented a coalition and a platform rather than an identity category. Marcus Tiggs, an African-American Republican, also ran for Council in 2018, and few people would have seen the election of a Trump supporter of any race as any type of progress.

Lee also does not share Obama’s preference for compromise and, unlike him, often seems more comfortable holding a bullhorn outside a meeting than a gavel inside. However, like Obama, he is a person of exceptional talent and motivation. Lee was an informed and insightful Council Member and Mayor while working full-time and participating in countless political actions. He also began and completed a Doctorate in Social Work at USC during his four years in office.

Yasmine-Imani McMorrin is similarly impressive. Elected in 2020, she has embraced her groundbreaking role as the first Black woman on the Council while working full-time in academic and non-profit jobs, organizing multiple community-building groups, and raising a daughter as a single parent. She is also the first HBCU graduate on the Council and the only current Member with a law degree.

Both Lee and McMorrin were required to observe unprecedented standards of decorum while subjected to everything from microaggressions to blatant contempt, based on their race and relative youth, and amplified in McMorrin’s case by sexism. They endured everything from having their names deliberately mispronounced to having their major projects sent to bureaucratic limbo.

The election of Albert Vera Jr. to our City Council in 2020 and Dan O’Brien in 2022 were refutations of Lee and McMorrin’s excellence much as Trump’s was Obama’s. After the historic election of

Andy and Diane Rosenberg
are sponsoring the
May General Meeting
IN MEMORY OF
Herb Rosenberg
beloved Husband and Father
Mark Stuart Rosenberg
beloved Son and Brother

See MAYOR on page 2

from MAYOR on page 1

extraordinarily talented Black representatives, white supremacy was reasserted through the elevation of mediocre white men.

Their lack of expertise, ambition, and curiosity represent a rejection of these qualities as assets in leadership. Their supporters perceive these as qualifications, because conservatism in Culver City means preserving the status quo in defiance of evidence and consequences. This was made clear at the April 24 Council meeting when, after hundreds of public comments overwhelmingly in favor of keeping and expanding the Move Culver City project, a position backed by multiple independently reviewed studies by staff and consultants, and supported by Assembly Member Isaac Bryan, County Supervisors Holly Mitchell and Lindsey Horvath, LA City Council Member Katy Yaroslvsy, the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the LA Times, this Club, and many others, the reactionary bloc of Vera, O'Brien, and Göran Eriksson voted instead to cut it back. They prioritized a small group of so-called "stakeholders" over every moral and scientific argument.

Their "stake" is the tainted legacy of a century of exclusionary practices. The value of property in Culver City has been [created and maintained through overt segregation, redlining, exclusionary zoning, and racial profiling](#). The city is in a desirable location, but so are Palms and Mar Vista. The "special lifestyle" here, as one conservative speaker at the April 24 meeting called the difference between Culver City and the denser and more diverse adjacent areas, came from the violence of the policeman's club and the banker's pen.

At the April 24 meeting, Stephen Jones, Janee Lennox from West LA for Black Lives, and I all spoke independently about the [Racial Identity and Profiling Advisory Board report](#) from the State Attorney General's office, which shows, using data provided by the police, that CCPD continues to pull over, search, and use force against Black and brown people at highly disproportionate rates, rates which are worse than at most other departments, including the LAPD. The Council majority ignored us, and the only rebuttal offered was a woman who shout-

ed, after her public comment time had expired: "I don't care what you say: I love the police." The first part of that phrase is not a throwaway. It reveals a lot that she has the privilege to not care what we think and to say that without shame. Vera and O'Brien's election was a validation of that principle, that data, expertise, well-constructed arguments, and the experiences of others are not as important as your feelings, and no one can make you examine them.

Council Members such as Gary Silbiger, Meghan Sahli-Wells, Alex Fisch, Thomas Small, Daniel Lee, and Yasmine-Imani McMorrin threatened the status quo by governing as if our individual "stakes" were not all that mattered, coming from activist, academic, public sector, and nonprofit backgrounds rather than [the local gentry](#). They began to analyze how we got here and to wake us from what Coates called "[The Dream](#)" to see what the [heroes and villains](#) have done. The backlash candidates of 2022 told resi-

dents there was no cause for guilt, reflection, or learning, everything could stay the same forever, they could enjoy the "special lifestyle" untroubled, and that they didn't need to listen or care. However, it takes a budget of millions to hold us back. As we struggle through this reactionary period, remember that Vera's election relied on calling in a lifetime of favors, paid for with his inherited wealth, and that [billionaire developer Michael Hackman spent over \\$600,000 to elect O'Brien](#). O'Brien was the only backlash candidate who won in 2022, and each vote he received cost close to \$100 in PAC and campaign spending.

At the April 24 meeting Vera, O'Brien, and Eriksson voted to sacrifice public safety, the needs of transit users, and the health of the planet to appease the "stakeholders," even though [all credible evidence](#) showed this choice will not even deliver what the "stakeholders" desire. I would conclude that [history will judge them, but history is already judging them](#).

AB-1913 Creates California Center for Climate Change Education

On Saturday, April 22, West LA College hosted an Earth Day opening ceremony featuring Assembly Member Isaac Bryan. The event celebrated the passage of Assembly Bill 1913, authored by Assembly Member Bryan, establishing the [California Center for Climate Change Education](#) in the LA Community College District, which will be located at West LA College here in Culver City. The bill provides five million dollars from the State of California General Fund for the development of the Center.

Assembly Member Bryan acknowledges in AB 1913 that "climate change is an immediate threat to the United States' national security, public health, national economy, and the legacy we will leave to our children". That's why the establishment of the new center will promote climate change education and expand internships and other work-based learning opportunities for students to study the effects of climate change on society; even allowing Culver City high school students the option to attend and graduate high school with an Associate's Degree in Climate Change. The new Center will be required to provide a summary report evaluating its accomplishments by January 1, 2027.

—*Danny Young*

Cars don't have to rule Culver City, or the future of L.A. transit

[Notably, just two days after Earth Day this year, the [Culver City Council majority voted to remove a major stretch of protected bike lane](#) to make room for a new lane of car traffic through the downtown corridor. Yet the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recommends among the most important things cities such as Culver City can do to reduce their impact on global climate change is encourage walking and cycling, and reduce car usage, particularly in city centers. The following article was first printed in the Los Angeles Times. —Editor]



Yotala Oszkay Febres-Cordero

by *Yotala Oszkay Febres-Cordero*

Culver City is a small town, and 1.3 miles of transportation infrastructure may seem inconsequential. However, if the city votes to take down the project—an outcome that seems likely given a new, [more conservative majority](#) seeking to weaken the previous council's progressive policies—it will be a devastating setback, not just for those of us who use the lanes but also for how Angelenos see the future of transportation in our region.

As a Culver City resident, mom, cyclist and enthusiastic supporter of public transit in my private and professional life, my position on the mobility project is not detached. I'm one of the many people enjoying the benefits highlighted in [Move Culver City's mid-pilot report](#) (literally—that's me on the cover, the mom on the cargo bike with my daughter, her friend and their stuffed animal friend Marley).

Drivers complain that the bus and bike lanes slow down traffic on the street. But the lanes don't do so by much: According to the [report](#), during peak afternoon traffic, travel time in a car has increased by a maximum of two minutes compared with a 2019 baseline. Meanwhile, overall traffic on the corridor has diversified and increased, with marked gains in bus ridership, cycling and pedestrian activity. Also important, the bus and bike lanes protect bikers, pedestrians and even other drivers from [traffic violence](#) that occurs with increased speeds.

I regularly ride through the corridor on my bike — to downtown Culver City, the E line (Expo) station, the grocery store, my daughter's ballet class — smiling

smugly as I whiz safely past cars. My husband, even more principled (and maybe even more smug), often makes a point of taking the bus to these destinations rather than using our car. But we also have the privilege of electing to do so. Many people riding the bus in L.A. County are not doing so on principle or because it's fun, but because it's the most viable option for them. A bus lane makes their lives better too.

Even I can admit that the implementation of the Move Culver project has not been flawless. The signaling system and striping has at times been confusing, though city staff has been responsive to complaints from residents. And the project is wasting money on a [minibus circulator service](#), destined for the E line stop, that too often sits empty because it doesn't go far and no one seems to understand what it is. Those resources would be better put toward making service more frequent and expanding routes for Culver's existing bus lines.

A common argument coming from some council members and opponents of the project is that because bus service is currently inadequate, prioritizing buses over cars with a dedicated lane does not maximize use of the road. They argue the infrastructure lacks support and utilization because of our car-centric culture and low ridership.

Those are not reasons to remove bus and bike infrastructure — those are reasons to double down. Council members are the decision makers. If bus service is not

up to par to maximize the protected lane, then it is on them to make it better. If the project lacks support, then they need to invest in the service frequency, reliability and connectivity to strengthen the ridership and thus the buy-in.

[Well-supported bus and bike infrastructure](#) is the cheapest and fastest approach to making transit more accessible, equitable, environmentally sustainable and convenient, which will make our urban spaces more livable as a result. [Extensive research and real-life examples](#) show that with solutions such as [dedicated bus lanes, more frequent and reliable service](#), and connecting the first and last miles of routes, people will opt for public transit. It's as simple as the "Field of Dreams" philosophy: If you build it, they will come. Look at the massive bus systems in [Bogota](#) or [London](#) or, here in the U.S., successful service overhauls in [Chicago](#) and [Seattle](#).

We are facing [climate](#) and [traffic violence](#) crises that are killing people, and that are exacerbated by [housing costs that push workers farther and farther away from their places of work](#). These crises are overwhelming — but they are also urgent and require political courage. It doesn't make sense to stymie the approaches that help us meet the moment, all in deference to the "car country" mentality that got us here in the first place.

Sure, a 1.3-mile corridor is just a 1.3-mile corridor. But it could be so much more.

Yotala Oszkay Febres-Cordero is an economic and political sociologist, American Council of Learned Societies Leading Edge Fellow and researcher with the Alliance for Community Transit-Los Angeles.

The 3-2 vote on Monday to dilute Move Culver City will cost about \$1.25 million and likely result in the return of a \$500,000 grant to Metro Los Angeles.

Links about MOVE Culver City:
[On YouTube](#)

[Bike Culver City on Facebook](#)

[Vice Mayor Yasmine Imani-McMorin's Twitter](#)

New CCDC t-shirts are here!



We are now accepting orders for Club t-shirts in a new design, refreshed for our 70th anniversary.

Shirts are 100% cotton, union made in Boyle Heights.

They come in small, medium, large, and extra-large and, for the first time, we have Men's (boxy) and Women's (fitted) cuts.

Place your order by donating \$20 (or more!) via [Act Blue](#) and emailing us at CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com your desired size and cut. We will deliver in Culver City and nearby; other orders will be mailed.

We also have a few shirts remaining with the previous design (now known as "heritage" or "throwback") shown below.

Di's Corner:
by *Diane Rosenberg*

We are saddened by the passing of long time Culver City resident and club member Julie Lugo Cerra, who passed away on Monday, March 27, 2023.

In 1996 she was appointed City Historian by the City Council. She also was past member and president of the Culver City Unified School District.

She served on the first Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission from 2001 to 2009.

The club sends its condolences to her family and many friends.



Culver City Democratic Club President Jeff Schwartz and CCDC Executive Board Member Leah Pressman took a selfie with author Joanna Schwartz (right) at the Festival of Books located at USC. Joanna Schwartz will speak about her book, **Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable** at the CCDC General Meeting on May 10 at 7PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Club website: www.culvercitydemocraticclub.com
 Club email address: CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com
 Follow us on Twitter: @CulvCityDemClub
 Instagram: CulverCityDemClub
 and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CulverCityDems>

May 10 • 7PM
CCDC General Meeting via Zoom

May 11 • 6 PM
Santa Monica Democratic Club Meeting – Via Zoom
Special Guest: Representative Adam Schiff

May 31 • 6:30 PM
Santa Monica Democratic Club Meeting
In-Person and Hybrid
Special Guest: Representative Barbara Lee
Thelma Terry Center at Virginia Ave. Park
2200 Virginia Ave, Santa Monica

May 13
LACDP JFK AWARDS
<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/jfk2023state>

May 26–28
California Democratic Party Convention
Downtown Los Angeles Convention Center
Volunteers receive a free convention observer pass upon completion of a shift.
[Sign up here](#)

June 3
Culver City Pride Ride
Ride: Syd Kronenthal Park 4PM
Rally: Main St, Culver City 6PM

July 2 • 1-4PM
Fourth of July Picnic, Blanco Park, Culver City

Support ACA-5—save marriage equality



After the Dobbs decision, Justices Thomas and Alito gleefully speculated about overturning other precedents like Obergefell. If Obergefell falls, the Prop 8 ban on same-sex marriage in California will be in full force.

So it is more than perfect that on Valentine’s Day of 2023, ACA-5 was introduced in the State Legislature. This measure would give the voters an opportunity to reverse the historic mistake of 2008 and [save marriage equality](#) In California.

Our State Senator, Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, is a co-author of ACA-5. If you support marriage equality, please call or [email her](#) and thank her. Her Capitol phone number is (916) 651-4028.

JOIN THE CLUB OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

For information on becoming a member of the Culver City Democratic Club call Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328

or

[Click here to join the Club or renew your membership online](#)

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

May is Bike Month

Hundreds rally to support Move Culver City outside City Hall on April 24



Come to the...

Culver City Democratic Club Fourth of July Picnic

Blanco Park • 5687 Sawtelle Blvd. • Culver City

July 2, 2023 • 1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m.

more details soon!

It's on July SECOND!

New hope for the Equal Rights Amendment



“It is indefensible that 100 years following the Equal Rights Amendment, gender equality is not the law of the land.”
—Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove

[The ERA was first introduced about 100 years ago and June 30, 1982 was supposed to be the date on its death certificate after not quite enough states had ratified it by that arbitrary deadline. The Constitution did not impose that deadline, Congress did that. And Congress can remove the deadline that was extra-constitutional in the first place. Enough States have ratified now and twin Joint Resolutions are in the House (HJ Res 25) and Senate (SJ Res 4) to remove the deadline. Senator Schumer has promised a vote.

In the House, a group of ERA warriors has launched the first ever Equal Rights Amendment Caucus with our own CD37 Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove as a Caucus Vice-Chair. Below is a transcript of her remarks at the launch ceremony —*Cynthia Hart*]

Thank you, and I am so proud to stand here today with all of my female warriors, especially my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues and the Co-Chairs of

this caucus, Representative Cori Bush and Representative Ayanna Pressley. They never say no to fighting for what’s right.

It is indefensible that 100 years following the Equal Rights Amendment, gender equality is not the law of the land. Without protections granted under the Constitution, women—especially Black women, Brown women, Indigenous women, LGBTQ women and people, and those at the margins of our society—are continually subjected to discrimination.

So, today, we are making it absolutely damn clear that this must be a national issue. You might have written us out, but don’t count us out. As [a] Vice Chair of this caucus, I stand ready to defend the liberties of those who would benefit the most from having the 28th Amendment added to our Constitution.

Abortion rights are under attack. LGBTQ rights and freedoms are under attack. The health and economic well-being of Black and Brown women are under attack. Hell, having a vagina right now is under attack. And being Black and Brown and Indigenous and

Asian—and needing health care—and working for a dollar, but not getting it back—it’s something we have to continue to stand up to and fight against.

So, today, we are saying no in every single language. It’s a no. Stop walking over us because we have shown you that we are not going anywhere, but that this sexist misogynist policy must go. I look forward to working with the leadership of these amazing women to make sure that the ERA is enshrined into our Constitution once and for all.

Coming soon to a clipboard near you: the Justice for Renters Act for the 2024 Ballot

by *Cynthia Hart*

Initiative petitions for the November 2024 ballot are already circulating! This weekend I was approached by a guy with a clipboard inviting me to sign initiative petition #22-0008 the Justice for Renters Act. The effort, funded by the Aids Healthcare Foundation, [seeks to straight up repeal Costa-Hawkins](#).

The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act limits the ability of local government to regulate rents on projects completed before February 1, 1995, and exempts single family homes and condos from rent control. SB-466, State Senator Wahab’s bill (that our Club endorsed in April) would relax Costa-Hawkins. This initiative aims for full-on repeal, so that California could no longer limit the right of cities and counties to maintain, enact, or expand residential rent-control ordinances.

Of course, whenever I am confronted with a new ballot petition, I always look for the [SB47 disclosure of the top three funders](#) and the Official Summary.

If passed, this initiative would only permit rent control ordinances, not mandate them. Passage would not be the end of the campaign for justice for renters, but it would clear away a huge obstacle. Supporters have already gathered 25 percent of the signatures needed to qualify for the ballot. They have until August 28, 2023, to turn in the rest.