

Culver City Democratic Club

Active Democrat



www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com

Email: CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com • Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/culvercitydems

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

General Meeting on Zoom — 7p.m. Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Program: Center for the Study of Political Graphics

President's Message by Jeff Schwartz

Consolidation revisited

In October 2017, Culver City began the process of consolidating its elections with the national general elections. Previously, Culver City had held its own elections in [April of even-numbered years](#) and voter turnout was shockingly low, [averaging below 20% for the last four elections before 2017](#). Because this schedule effectively disenfranchised a majority of residents, the State required Culver City to consolidate its elections so that everyone who turned out to vote for President, Senator, Governor, etc. would also see the local candidates and measures.

The local establishment considered defying the State. I don't know how that strategy has fared historically, but in the past few years it has been unsuccessful. Santa Monica's City Council, dominated by a conservative majority elected in 2020 (and [defeated this year](#)), refused to create a housing element that complied with State requirements and was briefly subject to the [Builders' Remedy](#), meaning that they lost their right to regulate construction of any building that was at least 20% affordable housing. [Sixteen massive projects](#) were immediately announced, then the City submitted an acceptable Housing Element and [negotiated with developers to reduce or cancel nearly all the projects](#). In January 2022, Culver City Council Members Albert Vera Jr. and Göran Eriksson [voted against Culver City's Housing Element](#). If they had prevailed, Culver City would also have faced the Builder's Remedy. More recently, joined by Member Dan O'Brien, Vera and Eriksson voted to vi-

olate the terms of a grant from LA Metro by removing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure from Washington Blvd. and [Metro now wants \\$435,000 of their money back](#).

At [the October 9, 2017 Culver City Council meeting](#), Eriksson and then-Mayor Jeff Cooper were the principal voices against consolidation, with Meghan Sahli-Wells the main advocate and Jim Clarke and Thomas Small cautious supporters. [On November 6](#) the Council voted to put a consolidation measure on the next year's ballot, with Cooper and Eriksson opposed. In 2018, after stern public statements on election law enforcement from then-Attorney General Alex Padilla, all five Council Members signed [the argument in favor](#) and no opposing argument was filed. The argument in favor mentioned the likelihood that, if the City did not consolidate, the State would sue, win, and the City would be forced both to consolidate and to pay the State's legal expenses as well as their own.

Voters approved consolidation in November 2018 by [an overwhelming 83%](#), with [74% turnout](#). Culver City has since had voter turnout of 86% in [November 2020](#), 63% in [2022](#), and [79% this year](#). For comparison, overall LA County turnout was [76% in 2020](#), [44% in 2022](#), and [66% this year](#).

The most public written argument against consolidation was made in the [April 26, 2018 Culver City Observer](#) by former Mayor Paul Jacobs. He presented two related points: that consolidation

would lead to a focus on non-local issues, and that the increased cost of reaching a larger electorate and of competing with County, State, and Federal candidates for attention would make it harder for people who were not part of what he called "a Democratic slate" to run. I do not know if the title "DEATH OF NON-PARTISAN LOCAL ELECTIONS?" came from Jacobs or the *Observer*.

OPINION

Jacobs' letter concluded with an endorsement of Council candidates Albert Vera Jr. and Marcus Tiggs, because they were committed to defying State law and fighting consolidation. It's not clear when the April 26 *Observer* appeared, but Vera and Tiggs were defeated by Alex Fisch and Daniel Lee in [Culver City's last unconsolidated election](#), which had been held April 10.

Jacobs argued against partisanship because he believed that partisan national issues were not relevant to the everyday running of the City and that a person's party affiliation did not reflect on their ability or character. He listed "health care, taxes, immigration policies, gun control regulation" as examples of issues which are outside the scope of local government. This was plainly false in 2018 and is even more so now. Regarding health care, local responses to COVID were a matter of life-or-death. Taxation is essential to running a government, and we saw the local establishment line

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up against tax and fee reform Measures [RE](#) and [BL](#), which saved the City from COVID-related layoffs and eliminated most of its CalPERS shortfall.

Culver City [became a Sanctuary City](#) for undocumented immigrants in [March 2017](#). This has required [regular vigilance](#) to maintain and, not only have police since defied it by licensing technologies such as Automated License Plate Readers and dash and body cameras from companies that share their data with organizations who may share it with ICE, but the original resolution contained a giant loophole: that Culver City will not share data unless required to by Federal law. Since Trump has promised [mass deportations will be carried out with help from local police](#), it's past time to codify that our City's staff, data, and resources will categorically not participate. Declining to share information voluntarily will not be enough to protect undocumented people, those seeking abortions or gender-affirming care, or political dissidents. Every aspect of information gathering, storage, and sharing must be critically reviewed. As a former librarian, [I recall my profession's sometimes-heroic responses to the PATRIOT Act](#).

Jacobs did not arbitrarily include gun control. The Parkland shooting was February 14, 2018 and that night this Club held our City Council candidate forum. Candidates Fisch and Lee made impassioned speeches in favor of gun control while Vera claimed no further laws were required, simply better enforcement of those already existing. In contrast, the current platform of the California Democratic Party includes [26 proposals for improving gun policy](#), ranging from reviving the assault weapons ban to rewriting the Second Amendment. I do not know if Vera's response that night cost him our endorsement or that election, but it showed a severe lack of knowledge, imagination, and compassion.

I have a stronger hunch about the moment that guaranteed Marcus Tiggs' last place finish in 2018 and ended his political career. It was [twenty-seven minutes](#) into the [KidScoop Media](#) forum that March 8. One kid asked a question which the pretense of nonpartisanship had kept any adult from asking: who did each candidate vote for in the 2016 Presidential election? Tiggs, who was not invited to

our forum because he was a registered Republican, came out as a Trump supporter. The children present gasped in horror. It is not irrelevant if someone voted for Trump, Reagan, Pete Wilson, etc. If a candidate cosigned racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, climate denial, the drug war, cutting social programs to give tax cuts to the rich, etc, that tells you something about them. To paraphrase Stanley Fish: [there's no such thing as nonpartisanship](#), and it's a good thing, too.

[Noah Zatz](#) and [I](#) have [looked](#) at the [results](#) of the elections since consolidation and found that Culver City has consistently voted to the left of Santa Monica and West Hollywood on state and national issues. We've also had higher turnout, which confirms [Manuel Pastor's](#) theory that [greater participation yields more progressive results](#).

	2020	2022	2024
CC	86%	63%	79%
SM	80%	59%	74%
WH	79%	59%	74%

2020 & 2022 numbers are from [lavote.net](#)
2024 numbers are from [politicaldata.com](#)

While this year's results have been regularly updated since Election Day as late-arriving ballots come in and ambiguous ones are "cured," as I write this November 24, the County has not posted a new [Statement of Votes Cast by Community](#), which breaks the results down by city, since the morning of the 6th. However, even that early count shows that Culver City resisted the "law and order" [hype](#) better than our more glamorous neighbors. DA George Gascón lost decisively countywide, but was up by 2% in West Hollywood and down only 0.7% here, while Culver City was the only westside city where Proposition 36 lost. Also according to that November 6 Statement, Kamala Harris did better here and Donald Trump worse than in Santa Monica or West Hollywood, but some of that is due to Jill Stein and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. getting more votes in those towns.

While the breakdown by city has not been updated, [the results for the city-specific races](#) have, and those have trended more progressive as more votes have been counted. The demographic breakdowns sent daily by [politicaldata](#).

com show that younger people voted later. Odds are very good that, once all the Culver City votes are counted, Prop. 36 will get a wider margin and Gascón will end up ahead of Nathan Hochman. Of course that will not change the County and State outcomes, but it shows who we are.

Jacobs made several predictions about the consequences of consolidation. Now that there have been three consolidated elections, how accurate were these warnings? First, he predicted "a loss of dialogue on local issues." This obviously has not happened. However, national issues including those he listed: healthcare, taxation, immigration, and gun control, have become explicit topics here. Jacobs could not have predicted the calls for public safety reform which dominated 2020 and 2021 and continue to be a major campaign issue, although local activists including this Club had begun openly challenging police militarization by opposing the purchase of drones in early 2018 and of an armored personnel carrier in early 2020. The pro-housing movement also had not gained critical mass here by 2018. [Conor Dougherty's account of the emergence of California YIMBY](#) begins in 2014, and [State Senator Scott Weiner](#) presented his first upzoning bills in 2018. These national issues, and those he did list, were always already present in Culver City politics but were not discussed because of center-right hegemony, maintained in part through low-turnout standalone elections.

Jacobs also predicted the cost of campaigning would double from his estimated \$50,000 preconsolidation average. This appears to have been spot-on. [Dan O'Brien's 2022 campaign was the first to raise over \\$100,000](#), and [Yasmine-Imani McMorrin](#) and [Bubba Fish's](#) 2024 campaigns had each raised over \$90,000 by mid-October. However, Jacobs did not anticipate the explosion in independent expenditures. In 2020 the Culver City Police Officers Association [raised and spent over \\$50,000](#) to support Vera, Eriksson, and Heather Wollin and to oppose McMorrin, Freddy Puza, and Darrel Menthe, [including \\$8000 for the city's first ever political billboards](#). In 2022 Michael Hackman, the landlord/developer of the Culver Steps, Culver

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Studios, and other properties, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to obtain an obedient City Council, including almost \$50,000 opposing Alex Fisch. Hackman gave Culver City Neighbors United \$14,500 in 2022, 78% of [their total donations](#) that year, and spent a remarkable \$171,000 on Denice Renteria's unsuccessful run, over 3 $\frac{2}{3}$ times what [her actual campaign raised](#). This year's final numbers are not in yet, but we know that Hackman spent big once again, along with other developers/landlords/realtors and the police.

Jacobs' letter concluded: "This issue is very important to me because I do not want to see our city influenced by outside sources" before endorsing Vera and Tiggs, which makes it very ironic that the establishment he defended has since been sustained through massive donations from outside sources.

Finally, Jacobs warned about consolidated elections resulting in the dominance of "the Democratic slate," by which he meant this Club's endorsees. Of his preferred candidates, Vera was a donor to this Club but neither participated in our meetings nor won our endorsement, while Tiggs was an open Republican. Ironically, the last non-consolidated City Council election, in April 2018, was also the last time our endorsed candidates swept, with Alex Fisch and Daniel Lee victorious. Vera was elected and Eriksson re-elected in 2020, along with McMorrin, whom we endorsed. Eriksson edged out our endorsed candidate Freddy Puza by [a heartbreaking 28 votes](#). Puza won in 2022, but so did non-Democrat Dan O'Brien, riding a wave of Michael Hackman's money.

This year was the first time there were two Democratic slates. Our endorsed candidates: McMorrin, Bubba Fish, and Nancy Barba, faced Vera, Denice Renteria, and Jeanine Wisnosky Stehlin, a slate backed by the new "Culver City Democrats United" organization, which [accepted thousands of dollars from corporations and PACs including the Police Officers Association](#), and whose logo appeared on Hackman-funded mailers. In a more rational society, [these slates would represent two parties. Locally, apart from the name confusion, they effectively do.](#)

I have written before about [the rise of](#)

[Caruso Democrats](#): Republicans who switched teams to improve their electoral chances while bringing their corporate donors and reactionary ideas with them. Jacobs was prescient to write "a Democratic slate" rather than "the Democratic slate." Republican candidate Tiggs did not figure this out, but conservative scion Vera did, while Eriksson and O'Brien both won while registered as "No Party Preference." If O'Brien seeks re-election in 2026, will he re-register as a Democrat to be eligible for Caruso Democrat endorsements?

This year the LA County Democratic Party backed Vera and McMorrin, the two incumbents, and Bubba Fish, who had raised the most money and had the strongest ground game of the other candidates. I do not believe the LACDP endorsements were decisive, but they did correctly pick the winners. Incumbency is powerful, and McMorrin additionally ran while Mayor, which boosted her visibility.

Although the three successful candidates raised the most money, spending alone does not explain the outcome. If it did, the massive independent expenditures by Hackman, the Police Officers Association, et al would have elected Renteria, Stehlin, and Wollin as they did Vera and O'Brien. However, funds raised by the campaigns themselves are a measure of their ground game and grassroots support, especially when those funds are from small individual donations rather than PACs, corporations, and billionaires. It's also possible that the flood of

ugly and dishonest mailers, social media ads, and push polls from various right-wing sources had the opposite of their intended effect.

Another explanation is that Culver City simply is a majority progressive city, as our votes for Gascón and against Proposition 36 suggest, and voters chose the candidates who reflected their values. However, Santa Monica [voters replaced all their conservative City Council incumbents with a progressive slate backed by their Democratic Club](#). Why didn't that happen here?

My theory is that Vera and O'Brien are special cases. Each of them accumulated so much good will in the community: Vera through his family's decades of philanthropy and O'Brien by creating the *Culver City (Unofficial)* Facebook page, which is the city's most active and most-read media platform, that voters overlooked their conservative leanings and intellectual shortcomings, and there is no local media with enough resources and readership to expose them.

I do not see any conservatives in the pipeline with similarly extraordinary reservoirs of credibility. Rather, I am cautiously optimistic that right-wing hegemony in this city is broken, that the road to power no longer runs through the Exchange Club and the Chamber of Commerce, and that the negative campaigning funded by Michael Hackman, the Police Officers Association, et al does not work.

We'll see in two years!

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

Lame duck Council says, don't look up

by Leah Pressman

It can be a lot of work to follow the Culver City Council, but often, late into the night, they hold important discussions and vote on issues we care deeply about. These discussions can tell us so much about our elected representatives and their values. The November 11 meeting was no exception.

That night, starting at 10:45 pm, the [council considered item A-1](#), which would have [declared a "climate emergency"](#) and made acting on the climate plans outlined in our policy platform and general plan an urgent priority. Culver City is too small to join the consortium of C40 "climate emergency cities," but could join their work by declaring a climate emergency as many other smaller cities have done. The declaration would also have allied Culver City with Los Angeles, which IS part of the C40 consortium, in work to better prepare for potentially devastating climate-driven local impacts on safety, health, city finances, and the economy.

Council Members Vera, O'Brien, and Eriksson made clear they did not support this item, so it was discussed but not brought to a vote.

Mayor Yasmine-Imani McMorrin thanked Council member Freddy Puza

for his leadership in putting this item on the agenda and stated that, given the climate-denying administration coming into the White House, she "had grave concerns on the federal level and how that might impact us on the state and local level." She stressed the importance of the City making its plans to mitigate climate change an urgent priority and expressed the hope that the council could revisit such a declaration in the future.

OPINION

Eriksson, Vera, and O'Brien all said the declaration was unnecessary because the city already has plans in place to address climate change resilience in its Legislative Platform and General Plan. McMorrin countered that the city has too often been slow to act on its long-term goals and plans, citing the long-unrealized plan for improvements to pedestrian and traffic safety in Fox Hills. Puza argued for the urgency of action given that the "scientific evidence is unequivocal; climate change is a threat to human well-being and the health of the planet" and warned of scientific estimates that the local impacts of climate change could cost Culver City upwards of \$43 million dollars.

Council member Puza challenged Eriks-

son to clarify whether he thought the climate emergency was real and Eriksson demurred, stating "I wouldn't call it a crisis. We have a challenge."

In his remarks that evening, Eriksson argued that the reduction of deaths from cold balanced out the increase in deaths from heat.

Eriksson was drawing on one of his favorite authors—Michael Shellenberger. Eriksson gave copies of Shellenberger's 2021 book, *San Fransicko: Why Progressives Ruin Cities* to friends, supporters, and even City Housing staff. Shellenberger began his career as a climate skeptic. In his 2020 book, [Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All](#), he proposes that climate change is not an existential threat and that business and technological solutions, if allowed to continue without unreasonable restriction, will be adequate to address the consequences of climate change. MacArthur Fellow Peter Gleick, writing in [Yale Climate Connections](#), called this work "deeply and fatally flawed" and "riddled with a variety of simple errors."

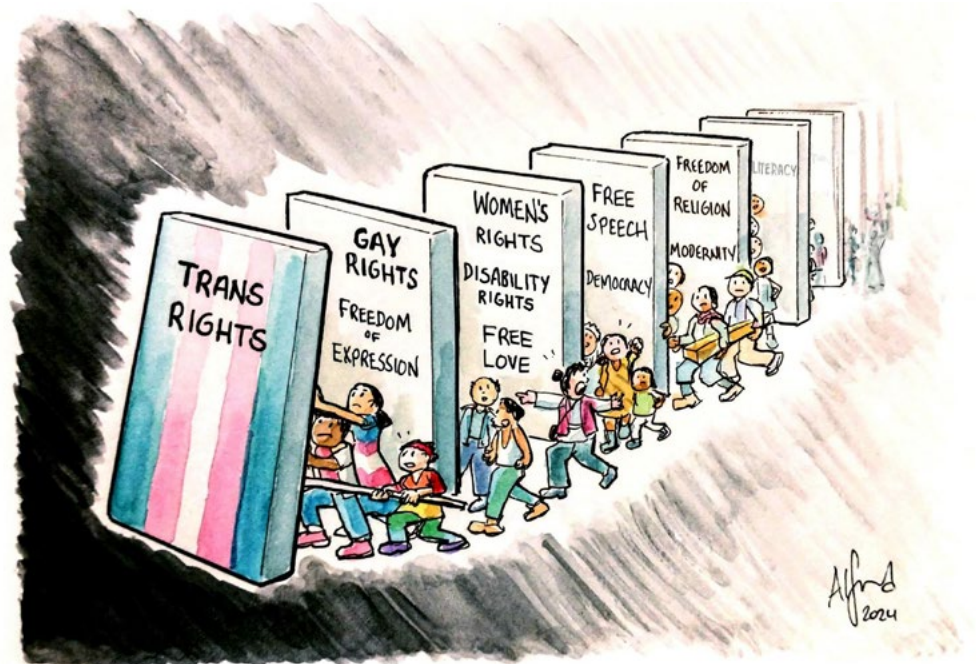
I look forward to this item returning now that the majority of the council are individuals who take the dangers of climate change and the importance of action seriously.

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UNITED WE STAND ★ DIVIDED WE FALL

Artist: Alfred Twu

Power is power

by *Danny Young*

Well... here we go again. What's the line about history repeating itself [first as tragedy, then as farce?](#) I feel like we didn't really get enough time to let the tragedy set in, but here we are being shuffled along to the laughing portion of the tour. A sign of the times, I guess.

Like most of us, I've been absorbing the analyses of what went wrong, trying to synthesize them and hopefully glean a bit of insight along the way. One thing I've settled on for sure is that this is a situation where multiple things are true at the same time. I can't point to a single conventionally obvious deficit. Instead, I think we should view this moment as a kaleidoscope of factors and failures. It's challenging even to limit the scope of the discussion but I'd like to try and address a few things that have stuck with me.

To begin, a common observation is to simply write the majority of the country off as racist, sexist and irredeemable. This is a tempting critique that I believe via personal experience is somewhat true, yet insufficient. An analogy might be a game like tennis. Sometimes it's played on grass, sometimes on clay. Sometimes the wind is blowing and the sun is in your eyes. You still have to win by two points. Those are the rules and conditions of the game. You know them going in and if you want to win you play accordingly. Bigotry is undoubtedly a factor in the game of politics but it's not the sole driver of a population's choices. We have conquered it before. I won't accept it as an automatic game over. We must anticipate it and move to counter. If not, then what's it all for? So I reject this excuse as a coping mechanism for failure and challenge us to clarify our goals.

A question we have to ask ourselves is, do we want a moral victory with norms and decorum intact? [Or do we want power?](#) Because the people we are fighting are ruthless and conniving. They don't care about the rules. They don't care if you know they're hypocrites, they don't care if Jesus would never do the things they do, they don't care if they're illegally profiting off it all, they don't care if they have to nominate sex perverts and criminals

to get what they want. They don't care. This is a period of crisis in which classical democratic values are being undermined by their transparent inability to deliver prosperity to the bulk of the population, and our enemies are capitalizing on it to slowly but surely consolidate the necessary power to change the direction of the country in favor of authoritarian rule. We must imagine, articulate and effectively communicate a better future for people to believe in, or we will continue to lose the faith of the people we desperately need on our side.

OPINION

That brings me to the narrative issue, which is that the Democrats simply do not have a coherent narrative except to say that Trump is bad. I was grateful to State Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas for attending our November meeting and more so that I was able to ask her about this. My concern is that the party exists only as a reaction to the right. It's very much a vote-for-me-or-else kind of politics and it's not inspiring nor appealing to people who have nothing left to lose. This seemed to resonate and she gave us some reassurance that at the upper levels of the party, this is being addressed. I really appreciate that however to be honest, I'm skeptical. [Listen to this interview with ex-Clinton and Harris 2024 adviser Philippe Reines on CNN, criticizing the "woke-left" for his loss.](#) Legacy media and the administrative class of the party want SO badly to blame anyone but themselves for their own failings. This is a guy who by his own admission doesn't even know what he believes in. In the interview, Reines says "I don't know what I'd call myself. I just call myself a Democrat. I'm not a progressive. I'm not a lefty. [laughing] I think I'm to the right of some Republicans on some topics." To an arrogant party hack like Reines, politics is not about what you believe in, or what is morally righteous. It's certainly not about helping save the immiserated poor living on the streets of your own city. It's simply a team that you play on that pays for your teenager's Tesla and 2800 square feet on Park Avenue.

How can this slime blame the left when it's people like him who are literally in charge and **lost twice?** Harris ran exactly the sort of campaign that he is asking for. He should know. He was there. We aren't living in the same universe if he thinks otherwise. For all his hatred for the left, it's guys like this that should be kicked from the party with the steel-toed boot of a working person.

Finally, it comes down to Harris herself and the campaign she chose to run. Now that we're on the other side of this I'll just be honest and say that I was never really a big fan of Harris as a political candidate. She came in fourth place in her own State of California in the Democratic primary. Her proposals seemed completely unserious at the time. Back in 2020, when Democrats were actually running on issues, [she said she would forgive Pell Grant recipient debt for people who started a business in a disadvantaged community and managed to stay in business for five years.](#) This is peak centrist-brain stuff. [David Graeber talks about the "extreme-center" of people like Obama and Macron, who are for both the market and bureaucracy but "at least they're not Nazis."](#) To the extent that she believed anything at all, she was ultimately just another extreme-centrist. In the 2020 primary, as Bernie Sanders was positioned to win the nomination by centering Medicare for All as a central policy issue, Harris said that she agreed with his proposal. But once the Biden team worked with Obama to consolidate all of the losing candidates and squash the Bernie movement, they dropped all mention of it. Biden was ostensibly for some form of a public option but it never materialized. [When given the chance, Harris said she no longer was a supporter of Medicare for All.](#) The doe-eyed baby in me wonders if maybe she never really cared about it in the first place. The truth is that the extreme-center corporate liberals are so ideologically committed to their "norms" and decorum and plainly, of protecting capital, that they would rather lose on their own terms, than adjust to accommodate a platform that can carry the party forward. Remember

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when they could have overhauled immigration and potentially put a damper on much of the Trump campaign's rhetoric? [Oh no but the Parliamentarian!](#) A fake job that no one has ever given a single whit to in history and I don't care what some contrarian rule-thumper has to say about it. Pathetic! Instead they would rather beg us for money by threat of the end of democracy if they lose. How many texts a day did you get from the campaign? They raised a billion and a half dollars and then spent it on parties with the Cheneys. Because at the end of the day, they have more in common with the Bush administration than they do with you and me. And now that they've lost, Harris pledges to help Trump and his team with a "peaceful transfer of power." Why? [Is Trump a fascist or not?](#) Was the whole fascism thing just politics or a legitimate existential crisis? Our words and actions are not aligned.

I had hoped that Trump was so transparently odious and incompetent that all of the challenges facing the Harris campaign could slip by. Certainly Biden took too long to pass the torch and a formal primary process would have given the Democrats a chance to solidify the message. The Harris campaign had a really short runway to get a national campaign off the ground. The right-wing media sphere is melting peoples' brains and globally inflation is wrecking incumbent administrations. These all help to soften the blow to our ego, but my whole point here is that ultimately there are so many fundamental flaws and contradictions with the Democratic party that if we don't resolve them now we may never be able to take back power again.

So where do we go from here? I believe that Bernie Sanders is correct in his assessment [that it should come as no surprise that the working class has abandoned the Democratic party as they have abandoned us](#). In fact, the only time the Democrats seem to be as ruthless and coordinated as the Republicans is when they're out stopping anyone to the left of Chris Christie. See [India Walton in Buffalo](#), former Squad members [Corey Bush](#) and [Jamaal Bowman](#), or even the time [Obama came out to convince the NBA not to strike after the police shooting of Jacob Blake](#). Typical play by Dems to recommend handing over all their leverage

and then appeal to the better demons of our nature. Leadership will likely continue on this path and as long as that is the direction of the party, we can only hope to eke out victories on the backswing to what will undoubtedly be largely unpopular policies by future Republican administrations. But without delivering material improvement to Americans' lives, these victories will always be fleeting. I believe the path is straightforward. When FDR ran on the New Deal he won the Presidency four times. He was so popular they had to amend the constitution to keep someone like him from ever winning again. Now is the time to replace the Philippe Reines of the national leadership, clean house and start with a new era of leaders with policies based on the material welfare of poor and working class Americans. Reconfigure society in a way that favors the quality of life of average people by pursuing Medicare for All, housing security, social services, antitrust legislation and protecting the environment. And crucially, as FDR did, instead of courting the campaign contributions of the corporate oligarchy, [make a bitter ENEMY out of them](#).

They had begun to consider the Government of the United States as a mere appendage to their own affairs. We know now that Government by organized money is just as dangerous as Government by organized mob.

Never before in all our history have

these forces been so united against one candidate as they stand today. They are unanimous in their hate for me—and I welcome their hatred.

For my part, I was not heavily invested in the national election this year. Not because I don't think it's important, but because I saw the writing on the wall, and there really wasn't much I could do about it. By all accounts, clearly, the Harris campaign didn't want people like me anyway. So I focused on the local level. I did what I could. I wish it was more. But I did what I could to help progressives take back power in Culver City. And even though we face the same challenges in our own town; billionaire overlords, partisan hacks, [ideological centrists](#), and clueless rubber stamps, we still came out on top. Not a clean sweep, but POWER. It feels good.

So while keeping our eyes towards the nation, let's work to build up our own community. Let's welcome more people into it and share our resources and help each other succeed. There is a lot of space between where we are and where we need to be, but if we don't have the ground swell of action rooted in community and humanity, we won't be generating the future leaders we need for this new era. I'm so grateful to all of the wonderful people who worked so hard to bring change to Culver City and I have faith that by sharing space with each other we can do our small part to make the world collectively a better place.

On Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8 There will be a Club Fundraiser at the Village Well Bookstore

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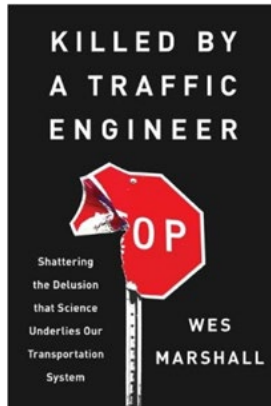
Book Recommendations for Village Well Bookstore fundraiser

Killed by A Traffic Engineer

by **Wes Marshall**

Marshall meticulously and authoritatively demonstrates that America's 40,000 annual road deaths are not accidental, and this transportation system, which generates so much death, injury, and pollution, is built on a broad and deep foundation of mostly pseudoscientific bullshit.

—Alex Fisch

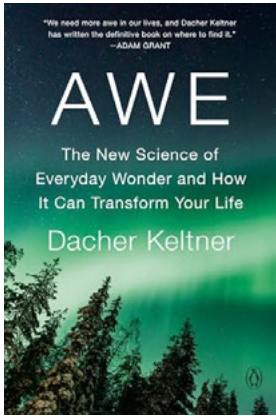


Jenny and the Cat Club

A Collection of Favorite Stories About Jenny Linsky written and illustrated by Esther Averill

This is a book about a cat and her friends growing up in Greenwich Village, New York in the 1960s. Though it is not a Democratic club, the cats do have a club that is very important to their lives and well-being! This is a delightful book with charming illustrations and won't make the adult reader roll their eyes!

—Bronwyn Jamrok



Awe; The new Science of Everyday Wonder and How it can Transform Your life

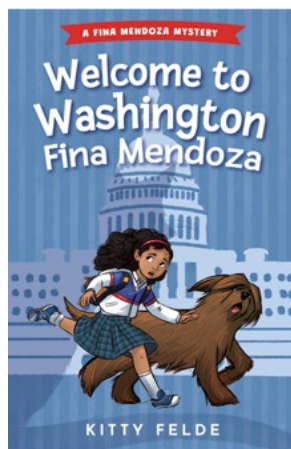
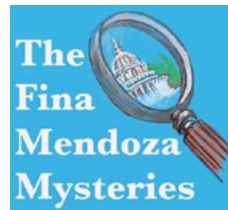
by **Dacher Keltner**

This book is not political BUT it is my lifeline to navigating this political climate.—Dorien Davies

The Fina Mendoza Mysteries

I recommend the middle school civic education series by my own brilliant and beautiful wife: *The Fina Mendoza Mysteries*, by longtime public radio journalist Kitty Felde. Fina is the fictional ten-year-old daughter of a Congressman from Southern California. She has many misadventures running around inside the U.S. Capitol, looking for clues to solve mysteries—like HOW did a bird get inside to poop on the head of the president during the State of the Union address—AND teaches young readers about our history and our country and our constitution along the way. You can check it all out at <http://www.chesapeakepress.org/>, and you can pick up copies (or order them) at the Village Well.

—Tad Daley



Kitty Felde, a longtime correspondent for KPCC, was named three times as the "Los Angeles Radio Journalist of the Year," and is the wife of our own active Club member Tad Daley. Kitty's civic education series, *The Fina Mendoza Mysteries*, tells the tales of young Fina, the daughter of a Congressman from Southern California, as she solves mysteries in the secret passageways of the U.S. Capitol AND teaches middle school readers about our history and our country and our constitution. Kitty will be doing a live civic education event—for kids and for parents and for all who care about our country—at Village Well Books and Coffee, 9900 Culver Boulevard in Culver City, at 4 PM on January 13, 2025. That's exactly one week before the inauguration of the 47th American president—and an excellent opportunity for children to contemplate what THEY might stand for, when perhaps someday they run for the very same office themselves. Please join us. Kitty is available for school appearances too! <http://www.chesapeakepress.org/>

Lesson 9: Read Books—My Three Recommendations

by *Cynthia Hart*

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century —by Timothy Snyder

Historian Timothy Snyder, in full-on freakout mode after the 2016 election of Donald J. Trump, penned “On Tyranny.” This slim volume is a survival guide to living as a free human resisting tyranny. How timely.

Lesson 9 of 20 says “Be kind to our Language” and “Read Books.” This is most timely because on December 7 and 8 the Village Well bookstore will contribute a generous percentage of sales to customers who mention the Club at check out. See you there!

But what books shall we read? I suggest there is no better place to start than Snyder’s lesson book. “History does not repeat,” he wrote, “but it does instruct.” And in that, Snyder sees a kind of hope for 21st century America. “Americans today are no wiser than the Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism, or communism in the twentieth century. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience.” Thus the lessons.

On this, my third reading of the book, I was particularly struck by how activism within our Club follows the lesson plan in important ways:

- Lesson 2: Defend institutions. —We defend our grassroots Club and by extension the Democratic Party and democracy itself.
- Lesson 3: Beware the one-party state. —Since I was in grade school, I have been hearing about the plan for a “permanent Republican majority.” In this dire moment, that looks more possible than ever. By keeping the Democratic Party’s local grassroots strong, we can hinder that effort.
- Lesson 13: Make new friends and march with them. —In this Club, I have met some of the most interesting, well informed, and fun people ever! Thanks for being my Club-mate!
- Lesson 15: Be active in organizations, political or not, that express your own view of life.

I plan to study Snyder’s 20 lessons and bind them to my heart with hoops of steel.

The January 6th Report —The New Yorker Version

In the epilogue of The New Yorker version, Representative Jamie Raskin calls the Report “...a powerful new weapon for truth in the coming battles to strengthen American democracy and protect American freedom.” I recommend acquiring a paper and ink copy of the January 6th Report before it disappears down Orwell’s “memory hole.”

I don’t know anyone who has read the whole 700-something page book. That’s not the point. It’s a reference book. It includes the Committee’s Recommendations as to how to fix the broken parts of our democracy, an Executive Summary, a ton of footnotes and Raskin’s insightful epilogue.

Representative Raskin says of our Party that we are “...the only major party in America today still standing by free and fair elections and defending the Constitution” and so we will “...be the political home for pro-democracy Americans

for the foreseeable future.” That’s an awesome responsibility for a Party still in the “OMG WTF” phase of grief from a staggering loss. But our Club, at least, is up to the challenge. If we can’t save democracy in America, surely we can save democracy in Culver City!

The Chronicles of Narnia —by C.S. Lewis

Hear me out. In the aftermath of November 5, 2024, I would find myself waking up in the night from nightmares of what life under a MAGA government would be like. One night, I decided that what I really needed was someone to read me a bedtime story. So I went to the Audible app and purchased (for only one credit!) “The Chronicles of Narnia Complete Audio Collection.” It contains all the books read by some of the greats of British stage and screen! I fell asleep listening to it and was transported to a magic realm where brave and loyal children could save the world. I woke up with the strange feeling that there was a smile on my heart.

LA Modern Art History Books—Jeff Schwartz

William Hackman’s [Out of Sight: The Los Angeles Art Scene of the Sixties](#) (Other Press, 2015) is the best book in print on LA’s emergence as an art capital. The short chapters focus on individual artists, dealers, curators, and institutions, while also telling a mostly chronological narrative.

Hackman (no relation, as far as I know) covers much of the same territory that Hunter Drohojowska-Philip did in [Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s](#) which, despite being published relatively recently (2011) by a major press (Henry Holt), is out of print. Both books are smart and accessible.

For more personality-driven accounts of the same scene, look for [The Dream Colony: A Life in Art](#), by Walter Hopps with Deborah Treisman and Anne Doran, and Tosh Berman’s [Tosh: Growing Up in Wallace Berman’s World](#).

All these books include black and white images alongside the text, all except *Tosh* add a section of color plates, and it’s easy enough to find a picture of just about anything online, but for a visually rich version of this story pick up [Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles Art 1945-1980](#).

Pacific Standard Time (now just “PST”) is a project by the Getty, coordinating and supporting thematically related shows at multiple institutions. The [first PST, in 2011](#), was on LA modern art and this was its core publication. The [second, in 2017](#), focused on Latin American and Latino art in LA, and [the current one](#) is on art and science.

The first PST included [Now Dig This: Art and Black Los Angeles 1960-1980](#), at the Hammer Museum. [That catalog](#) is out of print, but Kellie Jones, who curated that show, subsequently published [South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s](#). Daniel Widener’s [Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles](#) connects some of the artists Jones discusses to their peers in music (Horace Tapscott), poetry (the Watts Writers Workshop), film (Charles Burnett), and other media.

Self-Serving Addendum: Speaking of underground music, my book [Free Jazz](#) is back in stock at the Village Well!

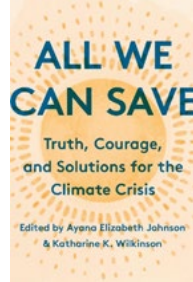
Book Recommendations from Disa Lindgren

For Adults

All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis

Edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Katharine K. Wilkinson

A powerful mix of essays and poetry from women who inspire us to join the climate movement. The leadership of diverse scientists, journalist, farmers, teachers, lawyers, activists, artists, and innovators—spanning generations, geography, and race—provide all kinds of ideas and insights to help us reshape society. Readers are invited to engage in solution-oriented public conversation on the climate crisis, and to take action with compassion and collaboration. A hopeful book!



Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto

by Tricia Hersey, founder of The Nap Ministry

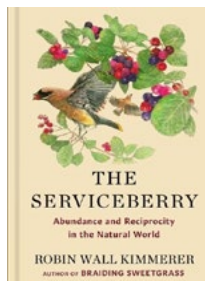
The author of this encouraging book invites us to connect with the liberating power of rest, daydreaming, and naps as a foundation for healing and justice.



The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

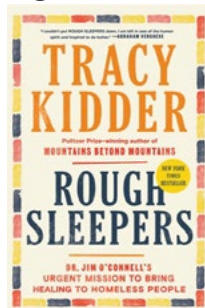
The indigenous scientist and writer of this lovely book is a wonderful teacher who beautifully shares her vision for living based on lessons from the natural world. Because our current economy is based on scarcity, competition, and resource hoarding, she explains that we have surrendered our values to a system that actively harms what we love. The author asks us to instead embrace gratitude, reciprocity, and community in order to meet our needs, because all flourishing is built on mutuality.



Rough Sleepers: Dr. Jim O'Connell's Urgent Mission to Bring Healing to Homeless People

Author: Tracy Kidder

This nonfiction book reads like a story, and provides readers with the privilege of witnessing the ways that the practice of medicine can put patients first, offering empathy, humor, and friendship along with medicine, socks, and soup. The author spent five years following a medical team who created a community of care for unhoused people in Boston, including neighbors who sleep outdoors. In this model, healing is about so much more than medications and procedures, and means respecting and valuing people as full human beings whatever their challenges or circumstances.



For Children (of All Ages)

More, More, More Said the Baby

by Vera B. Williams

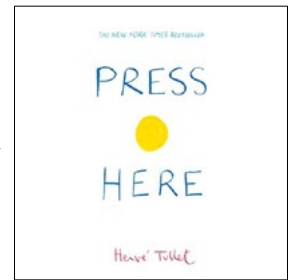
The protagonists of this book are Little Guy, Little Pumpkin and Little Bird. They are loved by the adults in their lives and readers will celebrate them, too!



Press Here

by Hervé Tullet

This delightful read-aloud book engages readers in the joy of interacting with its simple illustrations, but no electronic magic is needed. It is so much fun to follow the directions and be surprised by what follows.

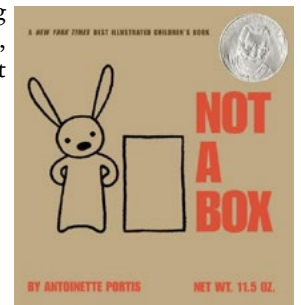


Not a Box

No es una caja (Spanish edition)

Author & Illustrator: Antoinette Portis

This is such an imaginative and amusing book! It uses a little rabbit, visual humor, and simple dialogue to demonstrate that a box doesn't have to be just a box.

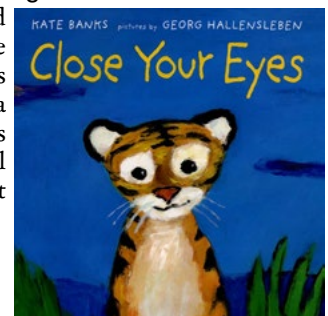


Close Your Eyes

Cierra los ojos (Spanish Edition)

Author: Kate Banks & Illustrator: Georg Hallensleben

One of the most beautifully illustrated children's bedtime stories ever. A little tiger is worried at bed time. But with his mother's encouragement, he goes on a lovely dream journey. The little tiger is comforted knowing that his mother will be there when he wakes up. A book that makes me cry because it is so touching.



More book recommendations

[Olga Dies Dreaming](#)

by Xotichl González

Fiction—but covers pure politics, hurricane Maria, PR culture and renewable energy.

—Kristen Torres Pawling

[Tasting the Sky:](#)

[A Palestinian Childhood](#)

by Ibtisam Barakat

Set in Ramallah during the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, her memoir captures what it is like to be a child whose world is shattered by war. Ibtisam is a Palestinian-American author and poet whose work centers on healing social injustices, especially in the lives of young people. I haven't read the book, but I attended an interview with the author, Ibtisam Barakat, and was very moved. —Jeanne Black

Heather Hutt Swearing In December 13 7-9 pm

Your support made history, and now it's time to celebrate! Join us as we witness Heather Hutt take the oath of office and officially step into her role. This moment wouldn't be possible without the tireless efforts of organizations like yours, and we'd love to share this special day with you.

Date: Friday, December 13, 2024
Location: First A.M.E. Church 2270 S. Harvard Blvd., Los Angeles 90018
Time: 7PM

Let's come together to honor this milestone and the work we've done to make it happen. We hope to see you there! Please RSVP using this link by December 10th.

bit.ly/cd10events

Warm regards,
Jasmyne Cannick



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Our Club website: www.culvercitydemocraticclub.com

Club email address: CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com

Follow us on Twitter: <https://x.com/CulvCityDemClub>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/culvercitydemclub/>

and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CulverCityDems>

NOW IS THE TIME!

RENEW CLUB MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025

<https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/ccdcmembership>

December 7 and 8

Club Fundraiser at the Village Well

"Do your holiday shopping at the Well!"

Mention the Club at checkout and the Club gets a donation

December 9 • 7 PM

Swearing-in of new City Council members

[Culver City Council Meeting](#)

December 10

[CCUSD School Board Meeting](#)

December 10-14

California Democratic Party

Virtual Executive Board and Caucus Meetings

<https://cadem.org/executive-board/>



December 11 • 7 PM

CCDC Membership Meeting on Zoom



December 21

National Homeless Person's Memorial

<https://nationalhomeless.org/event/memorialday2024/>

December 22

Save the Date

For Assembly Member Isaac Bryan's Annual Holiday Event

2025

January 13 • 4 PM

Kitty Felde, author of The Fina Mendoza Mysteries,

will be doing a live civic education event for kids and parents

at Village Well Books and Coffee

9900 Culver Boulevard, Culver City

January 18

SAVE THE DATE

Women's March



This year, I am incredibly grateful for every day that I serve our community as your State Senator. The work isn't always easy—but I am proud to say that I have fought to address social justice issues, civil rights, and worker protections in nearly every bill I have authored. And I'm thankful to have had the following bills signed this year:

SB 572 EDD: Surplus Building

Will allow for a former EDD building in the district that is no longer in use to be renovated and redeveloped in partnership with the community of Los Angeles.

SB 1089: Grocery Store Closure Notification Signed

This bill expands communication requirements for grocery store closures in low-income communities.

SB 1137 Anti-Discrimination: Intersectionality

Will prohibit acts that are contrary to anti-discrimination policies, and to provide remedies that will eliminate these discriminatory acts, including discrimination not just because of one protected trait, but also because of the combination of two or more protected traits.

SB 1340 Anti-Discrimination: Local Enforcement

Will allow local agencies to investigate and enforce cases of workplace discrimination alongside the state Civil Rights Department.

SB 1484 Jurisdiction of juvenile court

Ensures that children ages 12 to 17 are heard in the juvenile court system, protected from the formal court system that handles adults.

In addition to these bills, we scored important budget victories, including:

- \$1 billion funding for local governments to combat homelessness
- Record funding for public schools, making children a top priority
- Investing billions to expand access and eligibility for Medi-Cal and support public health programs
- Increased funding from \$8.3 million to \$15 million to expand training and access to high-roads jobs for underserved populations
- \$13 million funding for ongoing research, education and public engagement on labor issues in California
- Investing millions in affordable housing projects
- Reversed \$1 million Culver City Unified School District pupil attendance fine
- Safeguarding relief programs that support California's working families
- \$3 million funding to establish the South LA Black Cultural District
- \$1 million funding to help convert the Crenshaw Blvd. Employment Development Department (EDD) building into worker training, retail space and affordable housing

I know the Presidential election was a disappointment to many of us, but I am grateful that here in California we can continue to fight and lead on the progressive values so many of us hold dear.

Recently, Jamelle Bouie wrote a wonderful piece in the New York Times about Frederick Douglass. I found his column comforting and inspiring— and [I encourage you to read his piece, too.](#)

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”).

Di's Corner:

by *Diane Rosenberg*

Update on Club member Charlotte Gunter. She is still at Bentley Manor, doing well. Her attitude and her always being on the positive side is extremely good. She is still working on eventually going home, but is not ready. She thanks Pete Rockwell for bringing her the Club's newsletter each month, and enjoys reading it. She misses everyone, and is hoping for the day when we can all get together in person.