

Active Democrat



www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com

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

General Meeting on Zoom — 7p.m. Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Program: Local activist groups—including Our Culver, Streets for All, Bike CC, CC for More Homes, and others

President’s Message by Jeff Schwartz

Parting thoughts

Dear members, supporters, and other readers,

This is my last message as Club President. The February newsletter will carry one from the President-Elect, who will be chosen at our January 8 General Meeting.

It has been an honor to have been entrusted with the city’s oldest, largest, and most respected political organization. Over the last four years we have significantly improved how we work and expanded our programming, legislative work, and endorsements.

Despite [left-wing alienation from the Democratic Party](#) and the emergence of [right-wing “blue wave” “unity” Democratic Clubs](#) funded by billionaires like Rick Caruso and Michael Hackman, our membership is higher than when I was first elected. We’ve also increasingly moved to handling membership online, with payments through ActBlue and records kept on a shared spreadsheet. When I came in, payment was mainly by check and records kept on paper.

Similarly, we have moved our meetings to Zoom, which saves us thousands of dollars on room rentals annually. It also enables more people to participate and, for programs, makes it possible both to bring together speakers from multiple out-of-town locations and to make and share recordings.

Using Election Buddy online rather than paper ballots at in-person meetings has made our endorsement process more democratic. Every member now can vote, not just those who could attend an in-person meeting.

We got a debit card. Now we can pay for things online directly, rather than reimbursing officers for the use of their personal credit cards, and nearly all our transactions are in a single bank statement. Our bookkeeping no longer involves a box of receipts. We have changed Treasurers and financial consultants and deleted ex-members from our business license.

In the summer of 2022 the Fiesta La Ballona Committee and the City Council were considering getting rid of all political booths at Fiesta, possibly even all nonprofit booths, because they believed there was no other way to keep the NRA from coming and creeping everyone out, even though the NRA had consistently

breached their contract by not staffing their booth for the required times and hours. I was the only representative of a Culver City-based political group to address the Fiesta Committee and also wrote to the City Council on this matter. The outcome was the survival of the status quo: this year’s NRA booth featured a “Women for Gun Safety” banner above a table staffed by angry-looking clipboard-bearing men in trucker hats and camo vests. Meanwhile, our booth was full of Club Members, elected officials, endorsed candidates, and interested attendees, laughing as we discussed our hopes and goals for the election and our community. For several years I also invit-

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The CCDC Officer Nominating Committee will place the following candidates’ names in nomination at the General Meeting on January 8, 2025:

President:..... **Jeanna Harris**
 First Vice President: **Kelly Kent**
 Second Vice President: **Sameen Ahmadnia**
 Treasurer:..... **Cynthia Hart**
 Membership Secretary:..... **Diane Rosenberg**
 Recording Secretary:..... **Shannon Theus**
 Corresponding Secretary:... **Haifaa Moammar**

Nominations may also be made by any voting member at the General Meeting on January 8, 2025. Nominations from the floor will need a second. The member who is nominated must meet the criteria stated in the [Club bylaws](#) and be willing to serve if elected.

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ed the local Sierra Club chapter, West LA for Black Lives, and other allied groups who did not have booths of their own to share our platform. I started our Fiesta La Ballona pop-up Little Free Library, which attracted people to the booth and gave away hundreds of used books, mostly on political/cultural/social issues, and I worked with Karim Sahli to replace our aging banner with a new table cover and step-and-repeat. The Club Board has approved some new activities and merchandise I proposed for our 2025 booth; stay tuned.

I was very happy to lead this Club in becoming a founding partner in the Culver Pride celebration. Homophobia was ubiquitous when I grew up here in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently Karlo Silbiger and Kathy Paspalis endured shocking abuse as the first openly LGBTQ+ School Board Members, but seeing teachers march with rainbow flags in the City's 2017 centennial parade, the launch of Pride, and Freddy Puza and Bubba Fish's victories in the last two City Council elections has given me hope that things have changed.

When I first met Representative Sydney Kamlager, she was our State Assembly Member and I had just been elected a delegate to the State Democratic Party as part of the Forward 54 progressive slate organized by former Club President Tom Camarella. She was skeptical that the slate represented Culver City, because the calls and emails her office received from Culver residents were overwhelmingly conservative. I mentioned this in my second President's Message, in March 2021. Since then, our work on State legislation has increased several times over. Thanks to Legislative Chair Leah Pressman, we are covering [dozens of bills each year](#) and updating our comments at each step of the bills' [odyssey through the system](#). Leah has also coordinated this work with the Santa Monica Democratic Club's Legislative Committee, creating a progressive grassroots lobbying network for the westside. Our current Assembly Member and fellow Club Member Isaac Bryan has reported that his colleagues have noticed. We have changed how Sacramento sees Culver City.

That progressive delegate slate, run in

2018 by Tom Camarella, in 2020 by Greg Bartlett and Elina Antoniou, and in 2022 by Greg Bartlett and Leah Pressman, was endorsed each time by this Club. It has swept the last three elections with a single exception. One seat got away from us in 2018; it went to a UCLA grad student named Isaac Bryan. In 2022 we defeated a conservative slate which included then-Mayor Albert Vera Jr. Since this is an internal party election, not a public one, election laws don't apply. Vera's slate offered voters free sandwiches from his father's deli in exchange for their votes, but they failed to buy a single seat.

State Party conventions are largely theatrical spectacles, with the elected delegates there to provide a populist facade for a structure built and [run by and for corporate interests](#), but they are also excellent networking events. During my tenure as President, Leah and I have brought Party leaders from across the state to this Club, including Progressive Caucus Chairs [Amar Singh Shergill](#) and [Fatima Iqbal-Zubair](#), Environmental Caucus Chairs [RL Miller](#) and [Igor Tregub](#), Renters Council Officer and Berkeley Rent Board Member [Alfred Twu](#), DNC Member [Matthew Hilliard](#), [State Party Vice Chair Betty Yee](#), and others.

Moving our meetings online made it easy to present a wide range of activists and experts, including [Ryan Skolnick of the California Nurses Association](#), [Brian Fragne of the Sierra Club](#), [Keren Sookne of Citizens Climate Lobby](#), [Tom Latkowski and Mike Draskovic from Los Angeles for Democracy Vouchers](#), and Tony Tolbert and Adam Radzinski of the [Pay the Tab](#) podcast. [UCLA Law Professor Joanna Schwartz discussed her book *Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable*](#) and University of Missouri-Kansas City Law Professor Yvette Lindgren [spoke on abortion law after the Dobbs decision](#). I've booked one more progressive legal star: [Alec Karakatsanis](#), author of *Usual Cruelty: The Complicity of Lawyers in the Criminal Injustice System* and *The Body Camera* ([available free online here](#)), will discuss his forthcoming book [Copaganda: How Police and the Media Manipulate Our News](#) at our April 2025 meeting.

I am especially proud of two aspects of our programming. First, we have explored intersections of politics and culture. We organized a [program on last](#)

[year's entertainment union strikes](#) with Club Members Pete Rockwell (SAG) and Patrick Meighan (WGA) joined by State Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas and [one on local media](#) with journalists from the [Culver City News](#), [Westside Voice](#), and [Culver City Crossroads](#). [Last month's presentation](#) was from the [Center for the Study of Political Graphics](#), based in Culver City, and we have collaborated on fundraisers with the [Actors Gang](#), [Village Well Books and Coffee](#), [One Person, One Vote?](#) and [Brave New Films](#).

Second, while every organization was passing resolutions and putting up signs in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, we were the only group in Culver City to actually bring speakers from that movement to this community. [We hosted Baba Greg Akili of BLM-LA in February 2021](#) and had representatives of West LA for Black Lives as featured guests in our booth at Fiesta La Ballona.

As online campaigning has become increasingly important, due to the pandemic, the rise of social media, and other factors, our programs and endorsements have become more related. In both election cycles during my Presidency, we created [YouTube videos](#) with dozens of candidates. I spoke with every candidate for LA County Sheriff except Alex Villanueva. It was one of the stranger experiences of my life. I asked almost all of them how they planned to approach running the world's largest mental health facility (the LA County Jail holds more people with psychiatric issues than any other institution) and it was clear from their answers that none had previously considered that aspect of the jail. At least one candidate described in detail the circumstances in which they had killed someone in the line of duty. That was definitely not something I had expected to hear as a Democratic Club President.

Our videos with the judicial candidates were the most popular, probably because few if any other organizations covered these candidates. I was very proud that several voter guides linked to our videos. These are the most popular items on our YouTube channel, with one getting over 8500 views.

We endorsed Karen Bass for Mayor of Los Angeles in 2022, even though she would not appear on the ballot in Cul-

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ver City, because she had served as our State and Federal legislator and we felt that qualified and obligated us to give her our recommendation. We have since endorsed other non-Culver City ballot candidates, including Erin Darling, Jillian Burgos, Heather Hutt, and Ysabel Jurado for LA City Council and Sade Elhawary for State Assembly. While this Club is not chartered as a progressive group unlike, for example, the [Feel the Bern Democratic Club](#), our members have consistently voted to support candidates, ballot measures, and legislation on the left of the Democratic Party. We know that Culver City is not an island, so our success requires sympathetic leadership in LA, and that our State representatives need good allies.

I know that I was elected President of this Club because of my work as an advocate on issues including [saving the Mayme Clayton Library and Museum](#), [bringing rent control and renter protections to Culver City](#) and, most of all, [rethinking the role of policing](#). When I took office in February 2021, I said I was not going to run the Club as an activist: that I would be a neutral moderator, not use my role as Chair to influence the outcomes of discussions and votes, and not take advantage of my position to occupy extra space in debates during meetings. Vice Mayor Daniel Lee was concerned that this meant I would be doing less activism overall. I do not think this has happened, and that I have succeeded in running meetings impartially. If the Club has been a consistently progressive voice, that's because of you, not me.

Credit is also due to all those who served as officers these past four years: Tom Camarella, Eric Fine, Jeanna Harris, Cynthia Hart, Will Herrera, Haifaa Moammar, Leah Pressman, Freddy Puza, Pete Rockwell, Diane Rosenberg, and Shannon Theus, to the Nominating Committee members who have recruited and retained this team, to Tad Daley, Susan Obrow, and Ronnie Jayne Solomon for their work organizing our social and fundraising events, to Karim Sahli for his technical and design assistance, and especially to the members who have volunteered to stand for election or reelection as officers at our upcoming meeting. Our work continues!



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>

January 6 Noon-January 24 Noon
 Register to vote for our Club Members
 in the Party's Assembly District Delegate Election
<https://ademelections.com/home>



January 8 • 7 PM

CCDC Membership Meeting on Zoom
 Election of 2025 Club officers and
 adoption of 2025 Club budget



January 11 • 2-4:30 PM
[Martin Luther King Day of Service Celebration](#)
 Veteran's Memorial Park
 4117 Overland Ave

January 13 • 4 PM
[Kitty Felde Book Talk](#)
 Village Well Bookstore

January 13 - 7 PM
[Culver City Council Meeting](#)
Note change of location:
Culver City Senior Center

January 14
[CCUSD School Board Meeting](#)

January 18 • 10AM-12PM
[The People's March](#)
 Los Angeles City Hall
 200 N. Spring St, LA CA 90012

January 25 - 8:30 AM - 1 PM
 33rd Annual Empowerment Congress Summit
 "Where do we go from here? Chaos or Democracy"
[Register Here](#)

January 28
[CCUSD School Board Meeting](#)

Progressive City Council majority is sworn in



I am humbled by the trust you've placed in me and tremendously excited for the road ahead.

In my [first remarks](#), I mentioned that my dad once told me to have a "firm center and soft edges" and it stuck with me.

To my friends and neighbors, here's my firm center: a belief that our community grows stronger when we find new ways to share in its prosperity.

Whether you supported me or not, know that my door will always be open. I am here to listen to you, to learn from you, and to work with you to create a city where all of us belong.



Together, we will build a future that reflects the inclusive spirit of this community. Thank you for giving me the privilege of representing you in this important moment for our city. I'm ready to get to work and make Culver City a place where every voice is heard, and every person matters.

—Bubba Fish



As Vice Mayor, I plan to focus on three core priorities: sustainability, inclusivity, and creativity. I am committed to making our city a place where ideas flourish and opportunities abound. We need to think beyond the boundaries of the status quo.

I believe that the role of local government is to listen, to lead, and to serve. This coming year, I plan to host several town halls throughout this year to hear from different populations, from faith-based leaders, advocacy groups, business leaders, and more. Together, we will tackle the challenges ahead and seize the opportunities to continue to build a city we are all proud to call home.

Here's to the future of Culver City—strong, vibrant, and united.

I received nodding heads to agendaize:

Revisit our Sanctuary City policy to make sure it is up-to-date and to best protect our most vulnerable, and to possibly include abortion access, and support for our LGBTQ+ youth.

It's important to listen to the voices of our youth and revisit making Culver City a Climate Emergency City, including calculating financial costs, and other transparency and accountability measures.

In gratitude,

—Vice Mayor Freddy Puza



I believe that so much more than the status quo is possible. Hope is a discipline.

All members of our Culver City family should be treated with dignity and respect. We can innovate and lead to meet even our most challenging issues.

Community is the way forward. People power is it.

And that feels very resonant with me as we transition into a time when there is so much uncertainty about what lies ahead for so many groups nationally. The local level is a space where we can make an impact, deliver functioning government, do some cool things, and make some magic.

That is absolutely possible.

—Yasmine-Imani McMorris



Yasmine's mother, Delores McMorris, and daughter, Madison McMorris Watson, stood with re-elected City Council Member Yasmine-Imani McMorris after she was sworn in for her second term.

Photos by Karim Sahli

CCDC votes to support first amendment rights

Oppose [HR9495—Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act](#)

At our December meeting, our Club voted to join 354 civil liberties, religious, reproductive health, immigrant rights, human rights, racial justice, LGBTQ+, environmental, and educational organizations in opposing HR 9495—the “Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act.” <https://www.aclu.org/documents/civil-society-letter-to-congress-opposing-hr-9495>

This bill, which passed the House and went on to the Senate, does two things. One of them is sensible, right, good and worthy of bi-partisan support. The other —not so much.

The first three sections of the bill make sure that when the Americans who are being held hostage by Hamas finally come home, they will not face tax penalties for failing to file their tax returns while being held hostage. That’s good. So why did Representatives Kamlager-Dove, Lieu, and Schiff all vote “nay” on this bill? <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2024477>

It’s section four of the bill that makes grass roots not-for-profit organizations get nervous. That’s the part that terminates the tax-exempt status of “terrorist supporting organizations.” To be clear, that is NOT “terrorist organizations” but something new—a “terrorist supporting organization.” Given that the definitions of the words “terrorist” and “support” can be dangerously elastic, who will decide whether an organization is to be designated as a “terrorist supporting organization”? The bill says that designation will be made by the Secretary of the Treasury. And who will designate the Secretary of the Treasury? Donald John Trump. See the problem?

Trump’s Treasury Secretary might designate the ACLU or Planned Parenthood or the Women’s March, or the Culver City Democratic Club, a “Terrorist Supporting Organization,” and the designated’s not-for-profit’s tax-exempt status would be terminated without meaningful recourse.

The Culver City Democratic Club calls on our U.S Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff to vote “No” on HR9495.

Support [S2074—Protect Reporters from Exploitative State Spying \(PRESS\) Act](#)

At our December meeting, our Club voted to support the PRESS Act. The Protect Reporters from Exploitative State Spying Act (PRESS Act, S.2074) is a bipartisan federal shield law that would protect journalist-source confidentiality, subject to common-sense exceptions, such as cases involving terrorism, other serious emergencies, or journalists suspected of crimes. <https://www.spi.org/the-press-act-what-it-is-and-why-its-important-to-get-it-passed/>

Representative Kevin Kiley, who joined Representative Jamie Raskin in co-sponsoring the bill, explained it this way: “Liberty depends on the freedom of the press. Journalists are often the first to expose government fraud, waste, abuse and encroachments on personal freedoms. A critical aspect of the freedom of the press is the pursuit of truth without government entanglements or intimidation. Administrations from both political parties have unjustly targeted journalists and used compulsory process to obtain information from them about their sources. Most states have protected journalists from such interference, and it is past time for Congress to do so as well.”

You may think that something so good could never pass the Republican House of Representatives, but it did. In January 2024, the House unanimously passed the legislation. Now it’s in the Senate.

The Culver City Democratic Club calls on our Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff to support S.2074-The Press Act.

To Contact our U.S. Senators:
Senator Alex Padilla Email: <https://www.padilla.senate.gov/contact/contact-form/>
Washington Phone: 202 224 3553
Los Angeles Phone: 310 231 4494

Senator Adam Schiff Email: <https://www.schiff.senate.gov/contact/>
Washington Phone: 202 224 3841

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

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.



What is ADEMS and why should you care?

by *Cynthia Hart*

A few years ago the California Democratic Party did something (I don't remember what) that left me completely exasperated. I was outraged. So I called a wise friend and sputtered "This is terrible! This is wrong!" And my wise friend said, "If you don't like what the party is doing, you need to get more involved in the party." One way to get more involved in the party, he said, is through ADEMS. "Huh?" I said.

ADEMS, I learned, stands for "Assembly District Election Meetings." One third of the delegates to the state party convention are grassroots Democrats

like you and me who are chosen through these meetings. The delegates in the state determine who are the endorsed Democrats, what the party platform is, what the rules are, and what legislation and resolutions are supported. It matters who wins.

If you are a registered Democrat, you have the opportunity to help elect 14 assembly district delegates who represent your values. But first you have to register to get a party vote-by-mail ballot. <https://ademelections.com/home>.

Vote by mail registration opens at noon on January 6, 2025, and closes at noon

on January 24, 2025. You have more time to register if you plan to vote in person the weekend of February 22nd, but be forewarned there will be no in person location in or near Culver City this time. <https://adem.cadem.org/where-to-vote/?tags=ad%2055>

The Party will post a handy "[How to complete your ballot](#)" guide on its website in the near future.

District 55 ADEMS candidates who would like to introduce themselves at our Club's February 12 meeting should RSVP at CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com.

There's a caucus for everyone

If your New Year's resolutions include speaking truth to power and getting more involved in the Democratic Party, why not consider joining a caucus?

As of this writing, the California Democratic Party recognizes 19 different caucuses. Some are more issue oriented like the Environmental Caucus or the Children's Caucus. Others are more identity oriented like the Women's Caucus or the Irish American Caucus. Or you could join a raucous caucus like the Progressive Caucus (known affectionately as the "Troublemaker's Caucus") or the Senior Caucus. About the latter, don't be put off by the name. Membership is open to all California Democrats who either are seniors or who aspire to become seniors someday. Click here to find the list of all 19 and to join up. <https://cadem.org/caucuses/>.

January is the perfect time to join. Under Party rules, caucus memberships run very strictly January to December. (They really mean it. Don't try to join on New Year's Eve or your membership will expire at midnight.) Happy New Year!

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Don't Forget to Renew Your Club Membership for 2025!

To Join the Culver City Democratic Club [CLICK HERE](#) for the Club's ActBlue page.

Join the Culver City Democratic Club for next year for a \$30 donation! For more information on becoming a member of the Culver City Democratic Club, call Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328.

Dates of the Culver City Democratic Club General Meetings in 2025:

January 8
February 12
March 12
April 9
May 14
June 11
July 9
August 13
September 10
October 8
November 12
December 10

Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month

Di's Corner:

by *Diane Rosenberg*

Update on Club member Charlotte Gunter: Charlotte is still at Bentley Manor and doing well, but is still not ready to go home. I speak with her every other day, and her attitude is still on the positive side. She enjoys reading the Club's newsletter, and she's looking towards the day when we can have our general meetings in person. For now, she misses everyone.