

## **Minutes of the Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley Organizational Meeting**

October 23, 2017

Marie Callender's Restaurant, 751 E. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale

**Next working meeting:** November 27

**Next DFA-link meeting:** November 13

**Holiday potluck and brainstorming of 2018 goals:** December 11, home of Ralph and Jackie Wheeler, Palo Alto

**Introductions:** John Comiskey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Following that, each person introduced himself or herself with name and city.

**Adoption of agenda:** Ben Shapero moved that we adopt the agenda, Jackie Wheeler seconded it, and the motion passed with no dissension.

**Approval of minutes:** Gerry Hunt moved that we approve the September minutes, Ralph Wheeler seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's report:** Karen Porter reported by e-mail that we have \$1647 in the state account and \$3970 in the federal account for a total of \$5619. This includes \$750 of contributions in honor of Don Mayall and \$700 in new member fees recently. If you have not contributed yet to the Don Mayall memorial fund, you may still do so; contact Karen or John for more information.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Recall Persky representatives:** Pat Burt, former mayor of Palo Alto, spoke first on behalf of the movement to recall Judge Aaron Persky. He noted that judicial independence is very important and that a single case is not enough to justify a recall. However, he and others in the movement see a clear pattern of Persky's sympathy for people with backgrounds of privilege in cases of violent crime. He described two cases in particular (in addition to the Brock Turner case). He expressed the opinion that future recalls will not be done without great effort and referenced a SCOCA Blog article, which concluded that recalling judges is a rare and very difficult thing to do. The second speaker was Sita Stukes, a co-chair of the recall campaign. She was a victim of rape as a minor and described how it changed her life; she became depressed, developed substance abuse problems, and ultimately became suicidal. She described another case in which Judge Persky had handed down a sentence that she and others found unacceptably lenient. Her talk and personal story moved some of the audience to tears. John Comiskey then called for questions from people present. Hearing none (perhaps because people were still absorbing the speakers' remarks), he thanked the speakers and the other members of the Recall Persky movement who had come to the meeting. A question was asked about the endorsement procedure. Michele Dauber noted that they will probably not know until March whether the initiative has qualified for the ballot. That means an

endorsement will probably have to wait until March. At the November 27 meeting, those against the recall will have equal time to present their point of view.

**Santa Clara County Democratic Party fundraising:** This item was postponed.

**Program director:** John noted that the club is looking for a new program director. He described some of the upcoming programs for our link meetings, held the second Monday of the month (state senator Jim Beall in November, CD 10 candidate Mike Barkley in January) and then described the December holiday potluck and brainstorming session, which will be at Ralph and Jackie Wheeler's home. The club brainstorms goals for the following year and then votes on them at the January meeting. Ralph extended a special invitation to new members to come to this meeting and contribute their ideas and suggestions.

**Pre-endorsement conference delegates:** John announced the appointment of Marcene Van Dierendonck and Mary Gill to be the AD 24 delegates for the pre-endorsement conference in January, with Carolyn Curtis and Ralph Wheeler as alternates.

**Delta tunnels (Cal WaterFix):** Mary Gill reported on the meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District board on October 17. Club members Swanee Edwards and Meg and Alan Giberson were also present at the meeting and all four spoke against the construction of the Delta tunnels. Meg and Alan had submitted a five-page comment with well-documented information about potential problems in addition to the environmental impacts (uncertainty about cost, design, engineering) and alternatives to the tunnels (storm water capture, recycling, landscape conversion, etc.). Swanee has been working on this issue for years also, and has been to many board meetings (as has our corresponding secretary Joel Masser, who wrote the water plank in the state Democratic party platform). After several hours of testimony, mostly from people opposed, the board voted unanimously to approve Cal WaterFix but with conditions: one tunnel instead of two, a reduced intake volume from the original 9000 cubic feet per second, cost per acre-foot remaining similar to current estimates, the SCVWD board providing continuing input on the project as it goes forward.

**DFA endorsement in governor's race:** Marcene Van Dierendonck had drafted a letter to national DFA protesting their very early endorsement of Kevin de León for Senate, which she read aloud. She noted that while DFA claimed that 63% of those polled were in favor of de León, not everyone had received the poll (done by e-mail). After some comments from those present (agreeing that it was an abrupt and early decision and that not everyone had been polled), it was decided to move the letter forward to our corresponding secretary, Joel Masser.

**Joe Simitian events:** Jackie reported that the Dean Club will be cosponsoring an event with San Mateo County DFA on November 1 featuring Joe Simitian: "Bridging the Divide: Listening to Trump's America." It will be held at the Woodside Road United Methodist Church, Redwood City, 7:00 p.m. Joe will also be giving a talk on the same subject at his annual fundraiser and brunch on October 29 from 11:00 to 1:00 at Lucy

Stern Community Center, Palo Alto. For information and to RSVP, go to <http://www.joesimitian.com/blog/13th-annual-community-conversation-october-29th>. Also, the Century Club will feature Joe at a meeting on Friday, November 10 (\$25 members /\$30 nonmembers; proceeds will help fund the Democratic office in San Jose and the DVC next year. See: [http://www.demcenturyclub.org/luncheon\\_1711](http://www.demcenturyclub.org/luncheon_1711)

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Good government:** Nancy Neff reported on the DISCLOSE Act, signed by the governor on October 7 after seven years of effort by the California Clean Money Campaign and many grassroots volunteers. She received a round of applause for her hard work. She announced that there will be a Northern California CCMC grassroots summit on November 18 from noon to 3:30 p.m. at Mt. Diablo High School in Concord; lunch will be included and there will be car pools.

**Political outreach:** Marcene reported on voter registration efforts, which will continue on Sunday mornings at the California Avenue Farmers' Market. People thanked her (and Jennifer Sheppard who often works with her) for their work. Marcene will talk to Diane Rolfe about bounty money from the county for our club. John explained the bounty system wherein clubs or central committees can receive \$3 for each registration and \$.50 for either an e-mail or a phone number. Bundles of 100 registrations are sent in to the Secretary of State; our efforts are combined with those of the Peninsula Democratic Coalition. Mary Gill reported on a very inspiring SwingLeft event on Sunday with Lucia Nunez (California Democratic Party organizer in CD 10), Vecky Elliot (president of the Tracy Dem Club), and Crystal Souza (running for school board and working with SwingLeft in Stanislaus County). Pat Burt reported on Fight Back California, Ellen Tauscher's PAC to turn 7 California districts blue, which will be holding a fundraiser locally in the near future; he will keep us posted.

**Environment:** Covered earlier.

**Social justice:** No report.

**Economic justice:** Pat Burt reported that three Palo Alto City Council members proposed renter protection measures like those in Mountain View and San Jose, but the vote was 6 to 3 against. He noted that citizen initiatives are difficult to pass.

**Health care:** Gerry Hunt, who has been working on the single-payer health care issue for many years, reported that the Assembly select committee on health met in Sacramento the day of our meeting, but that he had been unable to attend. SB 562 has not moved out of the rules committee; we will know more on late Tuesday when we have the results of the meeting.

**Club building:** No report.

**Education:** No report.

**Club membership:** Membership chair Ben Shapero thanked the new members who were present for coming to the meeting. He had reported that we have 231 members (including 48 “paid plus members” who have paid for more than one year and 123 who are currently in arrears), 709 Facebook members, and 312 Yahoo members. So far in 2017 we have 64 new members and 91 new Facebook members.

### **Announcements**

❖ John Comiskey announced that The People’s House Project will have a reception at Vino Locale, 431 Kipling Street, Palo Alto on Tuesday, October 24 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The president of the organization and former MSNBC host Krystal Ball will moderate a discussion with Richard Ojeda, a veteran who is running for Congress in West Virginia, on the future of the Democratic Party. Proceeds will go to turning red districts blue in the Midwest and Appalachia. RSVP with John Moffett at [john@peopleshouseproject.com](mailto:john@peopleshouseproject.com).

❖ Wylmina Hettinga reported on the organization Raise Your Rights, which is working on a ballot measure to allow parents to demand that a jury rather than a judge determine if they will retain legal and physical custody of their child. For more information, go to [www.raiseyourrights.org](http://www.raiseyourrights.org).

❖ Chris Roat reported on the Virginia House election, where 45 Republican seats are being challenged. Sister District had a recent fundraiser and raised \$10,000; they have volunteers phoning and texting voters in Virginia. For more information, go to [www.sisterdistrict.com](http://www.sisterdistrict.com)

❖ Jackie Wheeler reported that the special election for a Washington state senate seat could be very consequential because it could turn the senate blue if Democrat Manka Dhingra wins. There is a phone bank for her locally Tuesday night (October 24): [www.sv4america.org](http://www.sv4america.org). Sister District is also supporting her: [www.sisterdistrict.com](http://www.sisterdistrict.com).

**Adjournment:** At 8:15 p.m. Ralph Wheeler moved that we adjourn, Ben Shapero seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Mary Gill

