



Minutes of the Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley Organizational Meeting

August 26, 2019

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

Next working meetings: September 23, October 28, November 11 (at Calabazas Library; no other November meeting will be held)

Next DFA-link meetings: September 9, October 14

Holiday potluck and goals brainstorming: December 9 at the home of Ralph and Jackie Wheeler

Introductions: John Comiskey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Following that, each person introduced himself or herself and described a recent political activity.

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

Approval of minutes: After one correction, Alice Smith moved that we approve the July minutes, Ben Shapero seconded the motion, and it passed with no dissension.

Treasurer's report: Amy Wright reported by e-mail that we have \$3867 in the treasury: \$419 in the state and \$3448 in the federal account.

NEW BUSINESS

Present endorsement inventory: John reported that most of the candidates for Senate districts 13 and 15 as well as the county board of supervisors have spoken to us at meetings over the last few months and will need to submit questionnaires but will not need to be interviewed. Sergio Jimenez, Huy Tran, and Jenny Higgins Bradanini have requested our endorsement for San Jose City Council as has Karina Dominguez for Assembly District 25. The endorsement committee will consider these races and make decisions on which to recommend. Because the primary has been moved up to March, we will have to vote on endorsements as a club at our November 11 meeting. There was a discussion of potentially making a rule about having a substantial, factual reason for opposing an endorsement committee recommendation, but in the end no action was taken. There was a short discussion of abstentions no longer counting as "no" votes (people will be asked to vote "no" or not vote), which will be decided at a future meeting.

Endorsement committee: Gerry Hunt volunteered to join the endorsement committee, along with current members John and Barbara Comiskey, Emilie Gatfield, and Jackie Wheeler.

TJ Cox fundraiser wrap-up: John reported on the August 24 fundraiser for Congressman TJ Cox, cosponsored by the Dean Club and held at the Iron Construction Headquarters in San Jose. About 60 people attended and \$22,000 was raised. The event included stand-up comedy and a jazz vocalist. Several people who attended along with “champions” John and Barbara Comiskey (Amy Wright, Jackie Wheeler, Alice Smith) said that TJ gave an excellent speech and stayed late to talk to attendees. Gerry noted that TJ was a good speaker when he came to talk to our club back in 2017. John said that TJ needs our support since Republicans are hoping to take back this district where former Congressman David Valadao, who lost to TJ by only 862 votes last year, has filed to run again.

Brag sheet template: Carolyn Curtis had sent John a template for people to use to record their hours spent in club work, which went out before the meeting as an Excel file and can be made available to anyone who needs it. The document contains categories of work so that people can simply record the number of hours worked in each category. This will help us keep track of hours to turn in at the end of the year to Carolyn, who has been doing this list of club accomplishments for many years.

Democratic Volunteer Center calendar: Mary Gill reported that the DVC calendar is now being updated regularly and contains events from many different groups (e.g., SwingLeft, Sister District); go to demvolctr.org and click on Events.

DVC debate-watch party September 12: Mary announced that the Democratic Volunteer Center will be hosting a party to view the presidential debates on September 12 at the Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield in Palo Alto (south of East Meadow). Pizza, snacks, wine and other beverages will be available, and Bill James will moderate. The \$35 tickets will help toward opening a DVC office in north county.

DVC letter-writing party to register voters September 26: Mary reported on two letter-writing events sponsored by the DVC in August; one to register voters in North Carolina for the special election (600+ letters and voter reg forms generated) and one to turn out the vote there (1400 letters generated). Club member Diane Rolfe opened up her home for the first event and (as a Palo Alto resident) secured the Rinconada Library in Palo Alto as the venue for the second event. The next such DVC event will be Thursday, September 26, from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Rinconada Library, 1213 Newell Road. Amy volunteered to come again and help set up and train people. We will be registering voters by mail in a swing state with data from Vote Forward. Jackie described the mailing: the prospective voter receives a letter with the registration form (partially filled out with their name and address), instructions, and a page that will serve as an envelope once folded. The page that is folded into an envelope has the recipient’s information as sender and their registrar of voters as the addressee. They can return the form with postage paid by Vote Forward. All the person needs to do is finish filling out the form, sign it, put a bit of tape on the page to create the envelope that contains the form, and drop it in the mail. Contact Diane Rolfe at onedianerolfe@comcast.net or Mary for more information or to RSVP.

SCCDP fundraising request: John announced that the county party finance director has asked our club to contribute \$500 to a fundraiser for the Santa Clara County Democratic Party in Milpitas on August 28 featuring Adam Schiff and Amanda Renteria. A long discussion followed: people who spoke were in favor of supporting the county party but also feel strongly that we need to support our endorsed candidates. Many club members reported on other fundraisers for the county that they have attended and said that undoubtedly there will be other future opportunities to donate. Jackie [who for many years has supported the Century Club, which raises money for the Moorpark headquarters] moved that we not donate at this particular time, and Emilie seconded the motion. At this point, Karen Porter asked for an amendment that we donate \$100, and Alice seconded the motion. The vote on the amendment failed 7-5. The motion to not contribute at this time passed 7-4. John encouraged people to donate to the county party monthly. Gerry volunteered to go to the event and donate \$100 as an individual, and other club members will attend and donate; club funds will be preserved for endorsed candidates for the time being.

OLD BUSINESS

Good government: Nancy Neff reported that **AB 1217**, Kevin Mullin's Issue Ad DISCLOSE Act, became a two-year bill, joining **AB 1784**, the Secure the Vote Act, and **SB 636**, the Ballot DISCLOSE Act. **SB 47**, the Petition DISCLOSE Act, is expected to pass this year. On August 20 members of the California Clean Money Campaign were in Sacramento to lobby legislators for **AB 201**, the Text Message DISCLOSE Act. Sabrina Cervantes, coauthor of the latter with Kevin Mullin, was targeted just before the election last year when negative text messages were sent to every Latino family in her district; to this day no one knows who paid for them. With a 90 percent open rate, text messages are going to explode next year, so this is a serious problem. This bill will require "paid for" disclosures on any mass campaign text message; unfortunately, it is opposed by the SEIU. Nancy said that CCMC is still opposing Evan Lowe's **AB 1451** unless amended; it bans paying signature gatherers per signature and requires that 10 percent of the signatures be gathered by volunteers or non-profit staff. CCMC's position is that if this bill passes unions will be able to get initiatives on the ballot because they can use their staffs for signature gathering while grassroots organizations will not be able to do reach the requirement. CCMC has suggested (1) reducing the 10 percent to 5 percent and (2) increasing the period allowed for signature gathering from six months to one year to allow grassroots organizations to be able to get propositions on the ballot. John, a constituent of Evan Lowe, has already submitted a resolution against the bill to the county party with other members of the central committee and will continue to oppose it.

Health care: Gerry reported that there will be a rally in Lytton Plaza on September 5 to demand that Anna Eshoo become a cosponsor of Medicare for All. People will gather at 11:30 and march to her office at noon. Gerry outlined some of the key components of Medicare for All.

Club building: Ralph Wheeler was unable to attend the meeting, but Jackie reported that

he has been working on the Dean Club Instagram account and that we now have 87 followers, a very rapid increase. [Thank you, Ralph!]

Social justice: No report.

Political outreach: Mary reported on a recent **Sister District** event with Shelly Simonds, the Democrat in Virginia who lost a state house race by one vote last year. The Virginia legislature is electing all its members on November 5. Shelly Simonds was extremely impressive and pointed out that this will be a very important election since with only a few seats that need to be flipped in this race, the Dems will control redistricting in 2020; also, there are a lot of repressive laws in Virginia that the Democrats will be able to overturn (e.g., it's legal to discriminate against LGBT people). There will be another Sister District event for Cheryl Turpin (running for state senate) on September 8 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in San Mateo: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sd020-va-turpin-capen-0908>.

Alice and Mary both reported on **Reclaim Our Vote**, which has been making calls and writing postcards to urge voters of color in various southern states to register to vote (or to vote in a special election). There are many phone banks locally, and it is also easy to call from home. For more information, contact: rov@peopledemandingaction.org.

Jackie reported that there will be a fundraiser for **Dan McCready**, running for Congress in North Carolina's district 9 special election, on Friday from 5:30 to 7:00, 84 Clay Drive, Atherton. Anna Eshoo will be there, and Dan McCready will call in on Skype. The election is on September 10 and the race is essentially tied. \$150 minimum. RSVP: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/083019atherton>

Environment: Amy reported that the G-7 is budgeting \$20 million to fight wildfires in the Amazon [but unfortunately this money was rejected by Brazil this morning unless Macron apologizes for calling Bolsonaro a liar (!)]. She also announced that there will be a Silicon Valley Youth Climate Strike on Friday, September 20, at 2:45 p.m. at the Diridon Station, 65 Cahill Street, in San Jose. RSVP: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/silicon-valley-youth-climate-strike>

Economic justice: No report.

Candidates and initiatives: Emilie pointed out that there have been many “whispering campaigns” and negative push polls in the past that have primarily targeted women (e.g., years ago Sally Lieber was targeted over her bill to curb the practice of spanking very young children). Emilie would like to start a grassroots social media campaign to combat these political attacks and invited people who are interested to contact her. She is also interested in trying to increase club membership and has been trying to identify programs for our link meetings that will specifically appeal to younger people.

Education: No report.

Club membership: Ben Shapero reported that there are 25 paid plus members (who have paid for more than one year) and 48 regular members, with 7 new members this year.

Announcements

❖ Alice announced that the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto is having an event about the Voters Choice Act on September 26 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto.

❖ Alice announced that on September 10 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. she will be giving her talk “Voting Rights in America: From the Constitution to the June Decisions, Including Rucho v. Common Cause” at the Woman’s Club of Palo Alto, 475 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto, sponsored by the Woman’s Club and the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto.

❖ Alice reported that September 24 is National Voter Registration Day; there will be an event from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Veteran’s Hospital, 3801 Miranda Avenue, to register VA families and hospital employees.

Adjournment: At 9:00 p.m. Emilie moved that we adjourn the meeting, Gerry seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Mary Gill