



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

September 23, 2019

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

**Next working meetings:** 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 7:03 p.m. Following that, each person introduced himself or herself and described a recent political activity.

**Adoption of agenda:** After one addition, Amy Wright moved that we adopt the agenda, Nancy Neff seconded it, and the motion passed with no dissension.

**Approval of minutes:** Gerry Hunt moved that we approve the August minutes, Amy seconded the motion, and it passed with no dissension.

**Treasurer's report:** Amy Wright reported that we have \$3911 in the treasury: \$419 in the state and \$3492 in the federal account.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**SCCDCC dinner reimbursement:** John reported that it was the Dean Club's turn to provide dinner for the SCCDCC, but expenses were paid by someone from Movimiento (a club in East San Jose). Gerry moved that we reimburse Movimiento for the amount owed, Nancy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Amy will make the payment. John offered to donate the amount he spent out of pocket (\$64) and will leave it up to Amy to decide how to do this (donation in kind or reimbursement and donation).

**Candidate visit, Jake Tonkel:** John introduced Jake Tonkel, who is running for San Jose City Council District 6 (currently held by Deb Davis). We cannot formally endorse Jake because he is a Green Party member. Jake described his background as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco working on health education and well-water systems, as a senior biomedical engineer who has worked on minimally invasive heart valves and surgical equipment, and as a community organizer. The issue he considers most important is income inequality. He supports affordable housing and renter protections, environmental and climate justice, public banking, and fair wages. He has worked to ban fracking and urged us to support AB 857, the state public banking bill. There will be a candidate forum

on Housing Affordability in Silicon Valley on Wednesday, September 25, at San Jose City College at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium Technology Conference Room. The forum will feature candidates for District 6 and also State Senate District 15.

**House Joint Resolution 48, Re: Citizens United:** Herb gave a very informative talk on the history of corporations in the US: the first corporations had to have a specific purpose and time frame and be approved by a state legislature and governor. They were state, not federal, entities. In 1886 there was a two-tiered tax structure in Santa Clara County, one for individuals and one for corporations, the latter having a higher tax rate. Southern Pacific Railroad sued, claiming that this was unfair. The court reporter wrote that “corporations are persons according to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment” (i.e., they have a right to equal protection) even though that was not in the court case itself. Herb mentioned later cases: *Hale vs. Henkel*, which hampers OSHA today by protecting corporations from having to turn over records unless there is a search warrant. In *Buckley vs. Valeo* it was decided that “money equals speech” and that corporations have the right to spend money for political campaigns just as individuals do. Eventually Citizens United gave corporations the power to spend unlimited amounts on political speech. However, these were originally state rights, not federal, and state rights are not permanent. Herb described House Joint Resolution 48, which local Congress members like Zoe Lofgren, Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, and Barbara Lee have signed on to. He presented a Move to Amend document that states that “only human beings, not corporations, have constitutional rights” and “political contributions and campaign spending are not equivalent to political speech and can be regulated.” This is similar to the House Joint Resolution 48, but the latter calls for a Constitutional amendment whereas this document is for the Democratic Party platform. After discussion, Herb moved that the Dean Club endorse the document, Gerry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Endorsement interviews schedule:** John passed around a list of candidates that the endorsement committee is interviewing, along with a schedule. He described the process and the difficulty the committee is having getting information from all the candidates in specific races. Because the primary has been moved up to March, we will have to vote on endorsements as a club at our November 11 meeting; candidates will be invited to give a short final pitch for their campaigns then. He noted that for San Jose City Council, the committee will be endorsing in the races in Districts 2, 4, and 10 but not in Districts 6 or 8.

**DVC letter-writing parties for Virginia GOTV September 26 and October 22:** Mary reported on two letter-writing events sponsored by the Democratic Volunteer Center to get out the vote in the November 5 Virginia election. The entire state legislature is up for election, and the outcome will determine redistricting for the next decade (including congressional districts) as well as the chance to reverse some repressive laws. We will write letters to voters in swing districts (only 4 seats need to be flipped!) on Thursday, September 26, from 1:30 to 3:30, and Tuesday, October 22 from 11:00-1:00 at the Rinconada Library, 1213 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Contact Mary or Diane Rolfe at [onedianerolfe@comcast.net](mailto:onedianerolfe@comcast.net) for more information or to RSVP.

**Sister District event in support of Cheryl Turpin September 25:** Jerry Hill, Kevin Mullin, and Marc Berman will give an update on the recent legislative session in California at a fundraiser for Cheryl Turpin, running for state senate in Virginia. (Cheryl Turpin will not be present.) 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., San Mateo. \$50 donation requested; address will be provided upon receipt of RSVP:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkXJJE0-mwGUUPCyCe4u-cDKsXSOE5gXmWnZVkJREGl57cUcg/viewform>

**Reclaim Our Vote fundraiser and film premier September 28:** Mary passed out fliers for the event, to be held Saturday, September 28 at the United Church of Christ, 400 W Campbell Avenue, Campbell from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Andrea Miller, founder and director of Reclaim Our Vote, will speak, and there will be a premier viewing of *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*. \$20 minimum. To purchase tickets: [bit.ly/ROVSept28](http://bit.ly/ROVSept28)

**DVC debate-watch party October 15:** Mary asked for Dean Club cosponsorship of a presidential debate-watch party on October 15 at the First Congregational Church in Palo Alto, 1985 Louis Road 94303 (south of East Meadow). The \$35 tickets will include food and wine; the proceeds will go toward opening a DVC office in north county. Mary moved that we cosponsor the event, Amy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Voter registration at California Avenue in Palo Alto:** Marcene Van Dierendonck announced that she will be retiring from her work doing voter reg at California Avenue. For many years she has been in charge of a booth there on Sunday mornings. This work has brought a large amount of money to the Dean Club in the form of bounty paid by the county party. If any Dean Club member is able to take this on, our club will continue to receive the bounty money. Contact Marcene if you are able to do this or if you want more information: [Mvd1131@aol.com](mailto:Mvd1131@aol.com). The group gave her a round of applause for all the years of hard work she did registering voters.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Good government:** Nancy Neff asked everyone to follow California Clean Money Campaign e-mails, which Trent Lange sends out, and act on them to write e-mails or make phone calls in support of AB 201, the Text Message DISCLOSE Act, and SB 47, the Petition DISCLOSE Act. CCMC is opposing AB 1451, Evan Lowe's bill that bans paying signature gatherers per signature and requires that 10 percent of the signatures be gathered by volunteers or non-profit staff. The governor has until October 13 to sign or veto bills.

**Health care:** Gerry began a discussion of the arguments we are hearing now about how people love their private health insurance and don't want to lose it if Medicare for All passes. Many examples were given of the exact opposite by several club members.

**Club building:** Ben Shapero has been working on outreach to members whose memberships have expired.

**Social justice:** Marcene reported on an effort in Los Altos: [compassionweeklosaltos.org](http://compassionweeklosaltos.org), where various organizations are working on helping the homeless, incarcerated, etc. You can see many options at the website and sign up to volunteer during the week of September 30 to October 6.

**Political outreach:** Covered earlier.

**Environment:** Amy reported on the Youth Climate March in San Jose, which was well attended. She mentioned Greta Thunburg's speech at the UN and also reported on an event sponsored by Greentown Los Altos on how what you eat affects the environment, at which she volunteered.

**Economic justice:** No report.

**Candidates and initiatives:** Covered earlier.

**Education:** No report.

**Club membership:** Ben Shapero reported that there are 23 paid plus members (who have paid for more than one year) and 50 regular members, with 8 new members this year.

## **Announcement**

❖ Herb announced that on Wednesday, September 25, Move to Amend will sponsor a free showing of the film *What Is Democracy?* at the San Jose Peace and Justice Center, 48 S 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** At 8:23 p.m. Nancy moved that we adjourn the meeting, Barbara seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Mary Gill