

DEMOCRATIC DIRECTIONS

CITY OF ALAMEDA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

December 2009

President's Column – December 2009

Long ago I was told that, fundamentally, politics is the art of making people's lives better. After serving three years as Co-President of the City of Alameda Democratic Club, I believe this more than ever.

It has been a great honor to serve as the Co-President of a club made up of so many committed, engaged and dynamic individuals. Individuals who care deeply about the future of our community. Individuals who know that civic engagement and action is the way to bring about progressive change. Individuals who have taken on the responsibility of informing the electorate about the critical issues facing our community. Individuals who are committed to democratic and Democratic principles.

I am proud to have stood shoulder to shoulder with you as we helped choose our publicly-elected representatives, selected the policies that would govern our lives, and advocated for good government. I was proud to be with you as we did our part to elect President Obama and reclaim our nation, as we fought for policies that would generate necessary revenue for our City's essential services, as we elected our local leaders, and as we stood up for meaningful health care reform, to name just a few. I have consistently learned from and been inspired by you.

As club members, through robust debate, dialogue, and deliberation, we gave voice to different views and different perspectives, and, guided by what we believed to be in the best interests of the collective good, we arrived at Club decisions. It is this process—as much as the ultimate substantive decision at which we arrived—that remains the bedrock of our work.

The City of Alameda Democratic Club remains as vibrant and meaningful as ever. With new faces stepping up into leadership roles and the steady guidance of long-time leaders, we remain sustainable and prepared for the future. As we face new challenges at the local, state, and national levels, I know that our Club will continue to be at the forefront of each of the critical debates and battles facing our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Alameda Democratic Club. I hope to have the opportunity to continue to serve you in the future.

Rob Bonta, Co-President

SPECIAL MEEETING DECEMBER 16

We do not normally meet in December since our luncheon takes place earlier that month. However, the City Council has called a special election to be held in February when Alameda will be voting on the fate of the former Naval Air Station (Alameda Point), known as the SunCal initiative. In order for us to be informed in a timely way, since absentee ballots will reach voters prior to our regularly scheduled meeting in January, the Board of the club has decided to hold a special meeting on Wed., Dec. 16 when both sides of the question will be presented. Our program committee has secured speakers who represent both sides of this very controversial issue, speakers who will present facts and truths rather than the hype from both sides. The club may vote to take a position for or against the initiative at that time. In order to vote, members must have paid up dues and have attended a sufficient number of meetings (2) according to our Bylaws. The club may also decide to remain neutral on the issue. The meeting will take place at Alameda Hospital, Clinton & Willow Sts., in Conf. Rm. A (2nd fl.) between 7:00-9:00 p.m.

●● OUR HOLIDAY LUNCHEON IS NEXT SUNDAY ●●

Come and Celebrate with us! On Sunday, December 6, we will come together to celebrate the accomplishments of Obama’s first year in office and the end of a busy and fruitful year for the club. And as is our tradition, newly elected officers for 2010 will be sworn in. The luncheon will be at Pasta Pelican, 2455 Marine Square Drive, from 12 noon to 3:00 pm. If you forgot to mail in your order form and check to reserve a space, please don’t mail it now. Instead, call Lucille at 510-264-0405 to let her know the names of the people who will attend. [Be sure to leave your phone number in case she’s not at home when you call.] You can then pay at the door, \$25 per person. Thanks very much.



Democratic Club Minutes November 11, 2009 Submitted by Alice Wilson Fried, Secretary

Mark Briggs, State E-Board Representative: Mark reported that he has to vote on two state delegate seats available and wanted input from members on whether we preferred a Progressive, Centrist or Conservative. The majority voted that he cast his ballot for a Progressive.

Election of 2010 Officers and Job Description Review

- Co-Presidents: Alice Wilson-Fried, Jim Oddie
Vice Presidents for Programs: John Knox White, Mark Briggs, Lauren Do
Vice Presidents for Activities: Debra Turnage, Dan Ballinger, NakMin Oddie, Kathy Moore
Co-Secretary: Sylvia Blumberg; Joan Robinson
Treasurer: Mike McMahon

SPEAKERS

Dave Needles addressed Sun Cal issues. Presented what he called facts voters need to know prior to upcoming special election that will cost the city \$360,000. Mr. Needles said that he is not opposed to homes, businesses in Sun Cal plan. He is opposed to what Alamedans have to vote into law via city charter and ordinances. Not good for city because he believes that the developer has no legal obligation to build; can sit on property for 25 years and doesn’t have to pay fees; that the cap on money they put up is 2million dollars but it may cost nine million dollars infrastructure costs and the profit goes to the developer.

ALICE LAI-BITKER – ALAMEDA COUNTY SUPERVISOR

Supervisor Lai-Bitker gave a State of Alameda presentation. She explained that Alameda has a 2.9 billion-dollar budget and some 8,700 employees. Taxes are in decline, she reported, which presents certain challenges for the county. The proposed gas tax cut was taken off the table this period, but may arise again. If this tax cut is implemented, it would take significant funds from local governments that rely on these taxes to operate and maintain bridges. The work done on the Park and High Street bridges was funded by Prop 1-A and there is money to repair the Fruitvale bridge. However, the future fiscal challenge Alameda faces is the 40 million dollars needed for the needed but unfunded low-collapse retrofit. The Supervisor also stated that health care is another challenge in that counties are responsible for the uninsured, children, pregnant women and the elderly. “The county needs to prepare for the final health care bill,” Supervisor Lai-Bitker stated, “with plans for access and quality care.” One thing Supervisor Lai-Bitker has done to address this issue is to establish collaboration with Alameda College to provide dental care to residents and training to its students. She also suggested that we contact our elected officials in the House and the Senate to make sure that the best bill possible is passed in Congress. Supervisor Lai-Bitker’s comments were followed by an engaging and informative question and answer session.



LONG TIME CLUB MEMBER HONORED
East Bay Regional Park District Board Member Doug Siden
Awarded Citation of Merit



On October 16, 2009, the National Recreation and Park Association in partnership with the Pacific Southwest Regional Council honored Alameda resident and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) Board Member Doug Siden with an Individual Citation of Merit award. Director Siden was elected in 1992 to serve on the EBRPD Board of Directors and has been reelected four times. He is being honored for his valuable contributions to environmental education and recreational opportunities to his community. As an EBRPD board member, he represents Alameda, a portion of Oakland, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo. Parks in his ward include Crown Beach, Oyster Bay, Martin Luther King Jr., Regional Shoreline, and a small portion of Anthony Chabot.

The Individual Citation of Merit is a national honor and is awarded each year to one individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the park, recreation, and conservation movement. Director Siden was nominated by East Bay Regional Park District General Manager Pat O'Brien. O'Brien highlighted Director Siden's involvement in his community, often with low-income youth.

"Doug Siden is so active in our community that many of us are left to wonder if there is actually more than one Doug, as if he has somehow cloned himself to be everywhere all the time," says O'Brien. "He is one of those rare individuals who is able to, in the kindest of ways, get you to do and try things you never thought you would."

O'Brien also nominated Director Siden based on his leadership as Chairman for the Measure WW Campaign, a \$500 million bond extension to preserve thousands of acres of open space and expand regional parks and trails for residents of Alameda and Contra Cost counties. In November 2008, passing by over 72%, this historic bond measure extension is likely the largest local parks bond measure to be enacted in our country's history.

"Doug would be the last to tell you about his accomplishments and the first to compliment others. He never forgets to thank the volunteers and staff that make things possible on a day-to-day basis, but will never admit just how tirelessly he works to bring people together to achieve great things," states O'Brien. "That is a true sign of leadership and why he earned this prestigious merit award."

Prior to his retirement in 1999, Director Siden was Executive Director of a successful program to provide environmental education and recreational experiences to youth, children, families and adults for over 20 years. Director Siden holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters Degree. He also received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the American Baptist Seminary of the West for his leadership. His community service includes being president of the Alameda County Chapter of the California Special Districts Association, past chair of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, vice chair of the Waterfront Action, and chair of the Alameda Rotary Club's Community Grants Committee. Previously, he served as advisory commissioner for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Director Siden was presented with the merit award on the final day of the NRPA 2009 Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. Founded in 1965, NRPA is the leading advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks and recreation opportunities.

Official Press Release - From the National Recreation and Park Association in partnership with the Pacific Southwest Regional Council: (06/01/2009)

2010 will be a big election year – a primary in June and a general election in November. We will be electing a new Governor, hopefully reelecting a Senator, as well as many other state officials. Our own City Council election is shaping up to be a vigorously waged campaign. And, as usual, there will be propositions, propositions, propositions. We will be opening a campaign office in late August or early September.

VOLUNTEERS -- GET READY!

NEW FACES AND SOME OLD ONES

As we move into the New Year, there are changes coming to our club's E-Board—some departures, some new faces.

● Rob Bonta, who has served several terms as Co-President with Jim Oddie, is leaving the board (but he will be a board member emeritus so that we will still have his steadying hand). ● Johanne Duffy is passing the baton to a new activities committee (a nice way of saying fund-raising), but will still be on hand to help maintain our ability to plan fun events. ● Alice Fried will no longer serve as Secretary, moving instead to Co-Presidency with Jim Oddie. ● Joan Robinson will return to serve as Secretary, a job she will share with Sylvia Blumberg. ● Karen Green is relinquishing her job as Vice President in charge of Programs. ● John Knox White will return to that committee and be joined by Mark Briggs and Lauren Do. Mark has an inside track to what is going on with the State Democratic Party, and Lauren Do hosts a blog that is full of information and opinions about what's going on politically in Alameda. (Check out her blog at Laurendo.com). ● Debra Turnage, Dan Ballinger, NakMin Oddie and Kathy Moore (Kathy has been providing our great pre-meeting food and came to us through her commitment to the Obama campaign, and keeping the office up and running.) comprise the events committee. Debra and Dan Ballinger, also joining us from the Obama campaign, are a duo. ● Debra Turnage is a Northern California native, born and raised in the City of Vallejo. Growing up in a small community for most of her life, Alameda was a natural choice when deciding where to relocate and continue growing both personally and professionally. Debra is a graduate of the University of San Francisco and has worked for Wells Fargo (formerly Wachovia and World Savings) for 19 years, where she is currently a Quality Assurance Manager for the Company. A resident for nearly 15 years, Debra has participated on the Economic Development committee for Alameda and has recently spent time, with Dan, coordinating our city's efforts with the Obama for America organization, which is now known as Organizing for America. Being members of the Democratic Club, in the time leading up to the election of 2008 and since, has allowed Debra and Dan an opportunity to participate more closely with the Club. This experience has inspired Debra to become more involved in helping to continue the Club's efforts to remain a voice of change for our community. She is looking forward to being an active member of the Board and anticipates nothing but continued, positive growth experiences on the horizon. ● Dan Ballinger grew up in the small town of Cody, Wyoming. After graduating from Northwest Community College in Wyoming and then Montana State University, Dan first spent time working in Yellowstone before deciding to explore the West Coast. He has made Alameda his home for more than 15 years, after finding the city to be a warm and welcoming place. Dan currently works as a Network Engineer for Open Table in San Francisco. He was one of the early architects who worked to establish one of the city's first free WiFi networks. Dan is motivated by the philosophy of the Democratic Party and was deeply inspired by the recent campaign. He and his wife, Debra, have been associated with the Democratic Club for a few years. He is looking forward to participating on the Executive Board and helping to continue the wonderful efforts of the City of Alameda Democratic Club.

City of Alameda Democratic Club

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