

-THE VOORHIS VOICE

APRIL 2020

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DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLAREMONT MEETINGS

FRIDAY issues Lunch - CANCELLED INDEFINITELY

Monthly LUNCHEONS – CANCELLED INDEFINITELY

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS – CANCELLED INDEFINITELY

MONTHLY MEMBERS' MEETING – CANCELLED INDEFINITELY

OTHER MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Campaign Trail

Because of The Virus, the April Democratic primaries have largely been postponed until June; those include Louisiana, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island.

The Wyoming Caucus and the Alaska primary will be held on April 4 as originally scheduled but both will be conducted as mail-in voting only.

Those unchanged (so far): Hawaii April 4, Wisconsin April 7.

Those moved to April (at least for now): Puerto Rico April 26, Ohio April 28 (mail-in only).

The pledged delegate count (estimated) at present: Biden 1217, Sanders 914, others (no longer running) 171.

There originally was a **debate** to be held in April but as of now nothing has been scheduled – so keep your eyes open. It would be between Biden and Sanders but, because of social distancing, not held at a single place.

Other Events

The March 27 Latino and Latina Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley, has been **POSTPONED**.

The new date is Friday, **September 25**.



DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLAREMONT NEWS

From the Editor

Look at the masthead of this publication, of the Voorhis Voice. It calls itself the “ Progressive Voice of the Pomona Valley”. I take that seriously – I hope that you do too. Of course, we could do more than at present in being that voice – but it needs its readers to help it along in that direction.

Take this issue: it is large, it has many different kinds of item in it. They are all worth reading. Many of them are simply informational. However, there are pieces in here which are worth thinking about (and talking about albeit at a social distance in present circumstances). There are even ideas for further reading now that we have extra time on our hands.

While the club has cancelled all its public meetings for the foreseeable future, the Executive Board is working to attempt to move some of those events online. The Board has already held its first online meeting. We are considering what to do about the April luncheon meeting in which our Senator Anthony Portantino is scheduled to speak and the April members’ meeting at which experts on Native American education are scheduled. The probability is that we would use the fairly recent program Zoom to conduct those meetings.

If you haven't made yourself familiar with Zoom, you might prepare for what will be coming your way by investigating it. Since the details are still being worked out, the Board will probably be emailing special notices of coming events.

In the meantime, read, appreciate and learn from this month's issue of the VV.

Note: the world is not flocking to my call to replace me as editor of the Voorhis Voice. That means you stand a good chance of being the lucky person if you but apply.

Announcement of DCC Member's Appointment

Dr. Mary Anne Schultz, Professor of Nursing and Informaticist (California State University, San Bernardino), was appointed by Governor Newsom to an 11-member statewide group of health professionals, scientists and community activists to guide California's Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine (CIAPM). She will serve, *as the sole Registered Nurse*, on California's Precision Medicine Advisory Council effective immediately. The charge of this group is to guide the activities of the CIAPM in supporting patient-focused research demonstration projects and to connect health and medicine stakeholders across the state. Specifically, the Advisory Council will provide high-level guidance on matters relating to this program in the form of recommendations of select scientific investigations, selection of committee members for RFPs (requests for proposals) and the advancement of expert project evaluators (<http://opr.ca.gov/ciapm/about/advisory-council.html>).

Precision Medicine, an emerging phenomenon in U. S. health care, is defined by the National Institute of Health (NIH) as "an emerging approach for disease treatment and prevention that takes into account individual variability in genes, environment and lifestyle for each person". (<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/primer/precisionmedicine/definition>). This approach allows physicians and Nurse Practitioners to more effectively gauge precisely which treatment, prevention and pharmaceutical orders are effective and for which groups or subgroup of people.

Notice of DCC Member's New Book

Ivan Light's most recent book (jointly authored with Leo-Paul Dana), *Entrepreneurs and Capitalism since Luther: Rediscovering the Moral Economy* (Lexington Books, 2020) has been published. Chapter 7 deals with Donald J. Trump's career in business from 1974-2016.

The Year-in-Review: Claremont High School Young Democrats Club

By Carolee Monroe

The CHS Young Democrats Club is mentored by our Democratic Club of

Claremont. Through our club, speakers are scheduled to present information on topics determined by the student club. The DCC also provides pizza at the YD meetings to facilitate the limited time available for speakers. Up to 70 students, usually 60, attend the meetings that have been moved to a room in the Theater Building as the attendance exceeds what is permitted in a classroom. The consistent attendance demonstrates the interest that CHS students have in Democratic politics positions and issues.

In planning programs for this current 2019-2020 school year, the students were decisive in the topics they chose for their meetings. During the first semester, Merrill Ring spoke about the then-forthcoming impeachment of the president, offering possible reactions and outcome. Then, in addressing the topic of the environment, Teresa Spezio presented a brief history of the environmental movement. Concerned about the use of pesticides as documented in Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring", the American public began uniting in actions and policies that led to the United Nations' Paris Climate Agreement and its Sustainable Development Goals. Terry Grill followed up with a presentation of plastics and their uses, over-uses and mis-uses. Her message was that plastics are everywhere and it is the individual who determines their use. Andy Winnick then spoke to the club members on student loans and debt. Andy explained the issues of college tuition and other expenses and the resulting debt, comparing it to other debts Americans owe. American students carrying the burden of debt tend to be "minorities", he said. Furthermore, it is reasonable for our country to provide tuition to students, as is done in many other countries. The final meeting before winter break was about gun legislation. Two victims of gun violence, Rhonda Foster and Cindy Montoya, talked about their experiences and their responsibility as survivors. They advocate, as members of Women Against Gun Violence and of Moms Demand Action, for gun reform and legislation. In January, an officer of the Young Dems, Paige Thielke, summarized the Democratic presidential debate that had been held the previous evening. The culminating activity of the semester was to write messages to organizations affiliated with the fall program topics. Thirty postcards were written and mailed.

The second semester began with Beth Bodnar, Young Dems Club Advisor, first presenting information about conventions and caucuses. She then organized a simulated caucusing activity with the number of groups decreasing as the minimum number of delegates for particular candidate was not met. Next, members of the CHS Black Student Union discussed racism in an institutional and structural framework. Five members presented data on food insecurity, education, home ownership, employment and under-employment, wages and debt and prison populations. Stephanie Sauter followed up on the topic with an activity that engaged the students as they considered the fates of students who could become part of the juvenile justice system. The final presentation of the school year was Merrill Ring's history of the Democratic Party since Franklin Delano Roosevelt and its current division between FDR Democrats and the Democratic Leadership Council. Merrill hoped to follow up with a discussion on the goals of the Democrats once Trump was replaced: what policies should the Democratic Party pursue? However, the coronavirus disease has altered the schedule

canceled has altered the schedule.

The remaining meetings of the Young Dems will be student-led culminating activities. The schedule does not permit any more speakers. Speakers scheduled and then canceled include Merrill, Chris Naticchia and Susan Castagnetto. To them, along with all who were able to meet and speak with the students, we are grateful. Although abbreviated, the Young Democrats Club 2019-2020 schedule of programs presented many learning and doing opportunities for its members.

With classes to resume on Tuesday, May 5, the interrupted school year for members of the Claremont High School Young Democrats Club will result in its members meeting with just time enough to elect club officers for the 2020-2021 school year and to engage in a culminating postcard writing activity.

These final actions give the club members opportunities to express their opinions and share their knowledge of what has been presented to them during the club meetings: one by choosing acknowledged leaders for the next school year and the other by expressing their opinions of material presented in the 2019-2020 programs.

Although abbreviated, the Young Democrats Club 2019-2020 schedule of programs presented many learning and doing opportunities for its members.

Compliments to the club officers, Merry Aichele, Ani Singh, Will Andrews, Paige Thielke, Grace Corcoran, Shannon Murphy, Rene Nieto, and Ryan Tineo and to Beth Bodnar, Club Advisor for their planning.

Also to be thanked are Karen Chapman Lenz, Abe Esquibel and Jack and Carolee Monroe who facilitate the meetings in various ways. Each of them shares, with consistency, in the task of the mentoring effort.

School Board Candidacy of DCC Member

Chris Naticchia, the club's V-P for Programming, is running for election to the Claremont Unified School District in the fall's election. Now however a seat on the board has become open beginning in April: Chris is applying for that position.

Beth Bingham had decided not to run for re-election to the board. She decided to move out of town in March which means that she is not eligible to sit on the board from that time. So the board has decided to fill her seat until the fall election by appointment. The deadline for filing is April 3 – the appointment will be made at the board meeting on April 7. It is not known whether the board will prefer a candidate for the short-term position who is not running for the regular seat or would prefer a short-term choice only.

Hillary LeConte has also decided not to run for re-election. That means there will be two vacancies to fill this fall. Since the last two board elections have had no opposing candidates, both have been cancelled which means that the fall election is the first chance in some time that Claremont voters will have a chance to change the membership of the board.

Humor

It has been suggested that I call to your attention the following democratic and Democratic video: it is important in the current state of affairs to keep the humor flowing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ue5F57dZMU&app=desktop>

Not Humor

Watch and listen to Barbra Streisand's anti-Trump song and video.

<https://www.npr.org/2018/09/27/652138634/barbra-streisand-addresses-trump-in-new-song-don-t-lie-to-me>



Essays Etc. by Club Members

Great California Progressives

The Democratic Club of Claremont is in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. We California Progressives have a long tradition of producing some of the great figures in American political thought and action.

These essays are dedicated to ensuring that we current members of the club and the party know our ancestors.

These pieces are of course very brief. I encourage readers to seek out and read more about the people whose life and work is summarized here.

Last year, upon assuming the post of VV editor I began the series. The people covered so far have been Carey McWilliams, Jerry Voorhis, Hiram Johnson, Dr. Seuss, Harvey Milk, Upton Sinclair, Earl Warren, Harry Bridges, Jackie Robinson. Tom Hayden and Cesar Chavez.

I will not be writing any further essays under this heading – other projects are calling.

However, I must point out an important source for what I have written and something that can be read with profit by all good progressives. It is a book by Peter Dreier (Professor at Occidental, nationally known political commentator and even speaker at a DCC meeting) entitled The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame. Each of the 100 gets a three to

four page essay. You will learn a lot by reading this book – and it will keep you aware of how vital the progressive tradition was in the 20th century.

Book Review

By Holly Kurtz

The storm before the calm: America's discord, the coming crisis of the 2020s, and the triumph beyond, by George Friedman. Doubleday, 2020.

(Friedman is a geopolitical forecaster whose previous books include *The next decade* and *The next 100 years*.)

What if it didn't matter who was elected president and instead the country followed two types of cycles that have guided it consistently for 250 years? This is Friedman's premise, although he recognizes it is too simplistic a view.

One cycle is the institutional cycle which has occurred about every 80 years since the nation was founded and which has marked our major turning points: the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War II and the future critical moment of the 2020s. You can add the subcategory of the long jihadist wars from 2003 to the present.

The other is the socioeconomic cycle, which occurs about every 50 years. Whatever has worked before stops working, and a crisis arises. Friedman believes the U.S. has seen five of these cycles: the George Washington cycle (leading the United States as one body), the Andrew Jackson cycle (westward expansion and growth of towns along with part 1 of industrialization), the cycle ending with Herbert Hoover (the 2nd industrial and transportation revolution, along with growth in immigration), the FDR cycle ending with Jimmy Carter (strong working class and rise of the middle class), and the fifth beginning with Ronald Reagan and most likely ending with whoever is elected in 2028 (growing inequality and the influence of the technology class).

Friedman does not mean that the presidents were founders of these eras. Instead, they presided over what was necessary as the country changed.

What are the first tremors of the coming storm, he asks. He believes Donald Trump's election was the beginning of the lead-up to the next institutional cycle and the next socioeconomic cycle.

For the first time, the two cycles are going to reach their crises at almost the same time, so get ready for a lot of instability. The old social order (today's technocrats) will battle the new (maybe people with less wealth). The nation's "outmoded government and political foundations will change in a seismic way."

On the other hand, political disagreement and violence have been notable in past eras. Friedman invites the reader to take a longer view and suggests that the storms once again will pass.

Note: Friedman's book is serious non-fiction but still appealing to the general reader. One drawback is having too much history in part 1. After a point where he discusses the deeper meaning of the movie *High Noon*, I went ahead to part 2.

An Overview of the Three Economic Relief Programs Developed in Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

By Andy Winnick

A number of club members asked that I briefly summarize and evaluate the recently (3/27) approved Phase III Stimulus law. But it is really necessary to see this law in the context of the Phase I (for \$8.3 billion on 3/6) and II (\$100 billion on 3/18) laws, since they are designed to work as a package. It should be noted that all three of these efforts should properly be seen as "relief" packages, not as "stimulus" efforts. It seems clear that it will be at least 6 to 9 months before we can reasonably talk about stimulating the economy; that is, working to significantly grow it again.

Phase III will cost \$2.2 trillion, that is \$2,200 billion, an unprecedented amount. Moreover, it is widely understood that a Phase IV will be needed within the next 60-90 days given the short duration of some of the programs already approved, but not yet implemented. By the way, the Phase III law is officially called the CARES Act, an acronym for Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

Let me start by saying that my evaluation of these programs is mostly quite positive. This package of funding for various programs and direct support payments is astoundingly large and comprehensive and quite without precedent. To put it in context, the programs implemented in 2008-10 to fight the Great Recession amounted to less than one-third of the cost, and most of that was given to large corporations, thought mostly paid back by them. Those programs saw little going to the people, except for the expansion of Unemployment Insurance from the usual 26 weeks (in most states) to 99 weeks. This time, thanks to a major push by the Democrats in both Houses, the current programs to cope with the pandemic, to quote Pelosi, were to a surprising extent "Turned on their heads from the original Republican proposals" and became Bottom Up, Not Trickle Down. Together the programs signed into law provide a remarkable and in many ways unprecedented level and type of support for the people and for small businesses (defined primarily as those with less than 500 employees), while at the same time providing a great deal of support for large corporations, sadly, with only minimal strings attached. Moreover, Trump has already indicated that he intends to ignore even those minimal elements of oversight and accountability as they pertain to large corporations. The original Republican proposals called for Phase III to cost about \$1 trillion, with about two-thirds focused on support for large corporations and the wealthy. Now, more than half of the greatly expanded (to \$2.2 trillion) programs are focused on providing relief to middle class and

poorer families and to smaller businesses.

It would take far more than the space I have been allocated to provide a thorough overview, but I will attempt to cover the highlights. For the first time in history, the federal government is mandating **paid** sick leave, though only an inadequate 2 weeks of it. It (the combined three laws seen as a package) is also mandating 12 weeks of **paid** family leave to care for children. Both of these programs are groundbreaking and will almost surely need to be revisited and expanded, but they are an important first step. It is again calling for the expansion of Unemployment Insurance, but this time for only 13 weeks (which is almost surely too short), and only with that time added to whatever the individual state is now providing -- which in some cases is less than the usual 26 weeks. But for the first time, it also calls for an additional \$600 per week for four months paid by the federal government. Also, for the first time, this program will cover those who have not previously been working in a regular "covered" job for which contributions were being made. Now part-time and gig workers will also be covered.

In addition, again for the first time, the Phase III CARES program calls for a separate, broad program of having the Feds send \$1200 to most workers (if they have a Social Security number) or \$2400 to joint filing couples, plus \$500 per child. This is a one-time payment; however, there will be a great deal of pressure to repeat these payments as this crisis goes on. In another victory for the Democrats, these payments do not go to everyone. Individuals who in 2019 had been earning less than \$75,000 annually will get this full amount, with the payment phasing out entirely for those who earned \$99,000 annually. For couples who earned less than \$150,000 in 2019, the payment will be the full \$2400, with the amount phasing out entirely at \$198,000 in prior income. (For those who have not yet filed their 2019 federal income tax return, 2018 income will be the basis. Moreover, 2019 federal taxes payments can be postponed five months till September 15, 2020.) The income-based criteria will cover a broad swath of the working poor and middle class, which is a major victory for the Dems who fought for it. However, it probably will not reach the really poor and destitute who file no income tax returns, but even this is not clear yet. By the way, Democrats were pushing for a base of \$1500, Bernie Sanders was pushing for \$2000. (It might be noted that this compares to the post-9-11 program under which a mere \$300 was given to each adult.)

There are also provisions to prevent evictions of renters for two to six months for failure to pay rent, and to block foreclosures for skipped mortgage payments, also for 2 to 6 months. But all of these missed payments eventually have to be paid. These programs, too, almost surely will also have to be revisited. In addition, there is a provision for allowing students to skip loan payments without penalty, until Sept. 30, 2020. But given the incompetence of the loan servicers, there are sure to be problems with implementation.

There are a number of programs concerning the provision of food: \$400 million for school food programs (which many school districts are still providing even while closed, via boxed meals), \$450 million for the Emergency Food Assistance program, \$16 billion for SNAP (Supplementary Nutritional

Assistance Program, which used to be referred to as the food stamp program), \$1 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, and some relaxation of the regulations as to who qualifies for what and for how long.

There are a number of programs focused on health care. There is a \$100 billion public health and emergency fund established to reimburse providers and hospitals for extra expenses fighting the virus and to make up for lost revenue due to delaying elective surgeries. Part of this is set aside for special payments to doctors and nurses. There is \$1 billion to expand virus testing, if we ever get the test kits, and another \$80 billion for a variety of public health programs. There are also changes in the Occupational Safety and Health regulations pertaining to protecting medical personnel, but whether these will get implemented in time to do any good is not clear.

Then there is \$150 billion allocated to the states, all of which have seen the demand for their services vastly increase while their tax revenues fell. This program will urgently need to be expanded in the near future. Republicans from smaller states got a guarantee of a minimum grant to each state of \$1.5 billion.

The Democrats also got \$25 million for the Kennedy Center, \$45 million for the Agricultural Marketing Service (guess why), \$25 million for transit agencies, \$10 billion for the Post Office, and a paltry \$400 million for security for federal elections. They asked for, but failed to get, the guaranteed right for voting by mail, 15 days of early voting and \$4 billion to safeguard federal elections. They also failed to get any permanent automatic emergency programs which would come into play in future crises.

Turning to the business-oriented programs: There is \$377 billion allocated to **small businesses**: \$350 billion of this will provide loans via the Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, which is notoriously slow and incompetent in these sorts of situations. Moreover, this program is 13 times larger than anything the SBA has administered in the past. There is a possibility of some of those loans being forgiven **if 90%** of the firm's workers are retained. (Good luck proving that!) These loans can be used to cover payrolls, rent/mortgage payments and utilities. An additional \$17 billion is to cover principle and interest on current SBA loans. Then there is \$10 billion for loans to firms that do not qualify for the main program, which, for the first time, could include self-employed persons and gig firms. A follow-up law to address the forgiveness issue is probably inevitable. It might be noted that a small business-focused effort is something that never happened at all in 2008-10 under Obama. Interestingly, Republicans got large hotel and restaurant chains, whose total employee base far exceeds 500, counted as small businesses. Whether this will allow loans to go to Trump-labeled, but not actually owned, properties is unclear. It is also unclear if Trump family-owned hotels/resorts can participate as "small businesses," since they are explicitly barred from participating in the big business-focused programs described below.

Finally, we must turn to the elephant in the room, the support for wealthy families and large businesses. Admittedly, the fate of the large corporations impacts the lives of millions of their employees. So Democrats as well as Republicans perceived the need to address the effect of the crisis on these firms, if not on their rich owners. But the Phase III CARES Act starts with \$280 billion in changes in business tax laws, a portion of which directly benefits only real estate investors, that is, Trump's and Kushner's buddies. Other changes in the tax laws are largely focused on the concerns of the rich and super rich generally. On the other hand, some of these tax changes, like a 9 month deferral (not forgiveness) in paying the 6.2% of employee wages in Social Security tax, apply to small and big businesses, with special provisions for firms with less than 100 employees. But then there are those programs aimed directly at big businesses. This amounts to \$500 billion, almost a quarter of the total cost of the Phase III CARES Act. The first \$29 billion goes directly to the airline industry. The next \$17 billion goes to "businesses critical to national security", which most observers read as code primarily for Boeing.

The next \$454 billion (of the \$500 billion) is for a program described in the Act only in very vague and confusing language that most Congressional members and their staffs admit they do not really understand. The program is described as being a backstop for an effort by the Federal Reserve System to "inject liquidity into the financial markets", presumably by buying up a wide range of bonds (government and privately issued) and other paper (that is, loans) from private firms, recognizing that only large firms, including banks and insurance companies, as well as a broad range of other large manufacturing and service firms, participate in these markets. This effort is likely to be very similar to what the Fed did in 2008-10 when it bought some \$3 trillion (\$3,000 billion) in bonds and loans, mostly using money it simply created on the spot. Apparently, this time the U.S. Treasury and the Fed will work together in deciding how much and which type of paper to buy and from whom. It should be noted that in the past the Fed spent about 10 times the amount of money provided by the Treasury to back up programs like this. This implies that the \$454 billion in fact could generate \$4.5 trillion to be injected into the economy. Indeed, this explains why Trump, at the signing of this law said:

"It's \$2.2 billion, but it actually goes up to 6.2 – potentially – trillion dollars. So you're talking about a 6.2 trillion dollar bill." (Here the word "bill" refers to the CARES Act.)

Many people thought Trump was just exaggerating, as he usually does, or was simply mistaken. But, in fact, he was quite correct.

At first, the Republicans and the Secretary of the Treasury (Steven Mnuchin) proposed that this massive program would all be done in secret, with no reporting to Congress of what was done until 6 months after any action was taken. Instead, the Democrats insisted that a Special Inspector General (SIG) be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Senate, who would be charged with monitoring everything that was being done, as it was being done. The Democrats also insisted that a Pandemic Response Accountability Committee be appointed to monitor the implementation of all

the Phase III CARES Act programs, explicitly including this \$500 billion, and that Congress be consulted about the appointment of the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director of that committee. However, at the signing of this law, Trump issued a “Signing Document” indicating that he viewed this and some other provisions of the CARES Act as infringements on his executive powers and made it clear he did not intend to follow those provisions. We shall see how this conflict will be resolved.

The public health experts seem agreed that the peak of both the number of infections and of deaths in the U.S. won't be reached until mid-May to late July. So it is understood by almost all concerned that there will definitely need to be a Phase IV bill no later than 2 to 3 months from now to consider a second payment of the \$1200/\$2400, a further extension of unemployment payments, more support for small businesses (perhaps in the form of loan forgiveness), and more support for the hospitals and clinics, state and local governments, and probably even for large businesses and the economy as a whole. We will have to see how the coming conflict between Congress and the White House regarding oversight and accountability concerning the implementation of the three relief laws plays out. On top of all this, we will have to see how the maneuverings associated with the up-coming Presidential, Congressional and state and local elections develop. All of this will clearly influence the nature of the negotiations over the Phase IV law. One can't help but recall the ancient Chinese curse: “May you live in interesting times!”

CHS Handouts

The following two items were handouts to the high school Democratic Club last month. A third was planned but, as the meetings with the students were cancelled due to The Virus, it was not produced.

CLAREMONT HIGH SCHOOL DEMOCRATS #1

You, like the rest of us, know about the major issues that are involved in the Presidential campaign: health insurance, the economy, racism, sexism, Russia and China....

However, there are important matters in the Democratic campaign that are not on that list. It is those that I want to talk about in these essays.

The first and central fact is that in this election the Republican candidate will be Donald J. Trump. He is not simply some Republican opponent that Democrats want to move out of office. He is the worst President in the history of the United States. That is not a simply my personal judgment: it is the opinion of scholars and students of American history.

It is not enough to say that he is the worst President of all time – for it could be a close race for the bottom spot. Rather he is such a failure as a President that he belongs on a different list. My suggestion is that he belongs on the list of major American disasters. That list would include: Pearl Harbor 9/11

MAJOR AMERICAN DISASTERS. THAT LIST WOULD INCLUDE: Pearl Harbor, 9/11, Vietnam... That is the company that Trump is keeping.

So the election of 2020 is being shaped by the fact that we Democrats are facing an American disaster. And for the good of the country (and the world given global warming) he must be defeated.

However, there are two different possible responses to our situation. We may, and there are many Democrats who hold this view, think that the only concern in this election will be beating Trump. And thus the *only* matter of importance in the Democratic primaries is who is most likely of all the Democrats to beat Trump in the general election. If you read about what is now going on with that idea in mind, you will quickly discover that many Democrats think that way.

On the other hand, there is another set of Democrats who, while recognizing the danger of a second Trump term and thus making his defeat a major priority, do not think that is *only* issue. We need to plan for what happens after Trump, what a Democratic President must be doing. In Iraq, we invaded and overthrew Saddam Hussein, but the Bush administration assumed that once Saddam was gone, the problem was gone and everything would be hunky-dory in Iraq and the Middle East. That is obviously not what is happened – and the lesson to be learned is that once Trump has been overthrown, we cannot just assume that the country will be in perfect order, will return to normal. Therefore this species of Democrat believes that it is important to choose a candidate who will not only beat Trump but will also have a conception of what needs to be done to solve the problems created by the Trump Presidency *and the problems that caused it in the first place*.

Thus, the issue facing Democrats in choosing their Presidential candidate is whether beating Trump is the only important thing or whether it is also necessary to ask What Next?

You, the Democrats of Claremont High, must answer the question ‘**Do I think that the *only* aim of the Democratic Party must be to beat Trump or do I think that it *also* matters what policies our candidate would pursue if elected?**’

CLAREMONT HIGH SCHOOL DEMOCRATS #2

The coming Presidential election is highly unusual in that the Republican candidate will be the bottom of the barrel as a President. But there is more to it than that: the election for the Democrats is, as someone has said, a fight for the soul of the Democratic Party.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt put together a new version of the Democratic Party – it became a party of and for the working people of the United States and that meant it became a multi-racial, multi-ethnic party.

From the 1950’s through the 1980’s the FDR coalition battled against the Republicans who were the party of the wealthy, the party of business,

eventually the party of those who were opposed to equality and to America being a country that celebrated diversity in race, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion. The battles were not always won: in elections from 1952 through 1988, the Republican candidate won seven of the ten elections.

In the run-up to the 1992 election, an organization called the Democratic Leadership Council convinced a charismatic young Democratic hopeful, Bill Clinton, that the party had to give up on its FDR heritage of being the party of labor and struggling minorities – it had to go to where the money and the power is. That meant forging an alliance with Wall Street and American financial interests. Clinton won the election and the Democratic Party, according to the FDR wing, lost its soul.

But it worked: from the '92 election through that of 2012, Democrats won four of the six elections (and should have won at least one other had not the Supreme Court intervened on the side of the Republicans in 2000).

It took some time but the FDR Democrats became an organized opposition to the Clinton direction. That opposition first strongly appeared in the 2016 election where Bernie Sanders (who in his allegiance to FDR had refused to join the party) strongly challenged Hillary Clinton. That opposition has grown even stronger in the current campaign: Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are leading a revolution (as Sanders calls it) within the party. But, of course, the post-Clinton side is not surrendering power easily. Thus, the party is divided.

You, the Democrats of Claremont High, have to decide which side you favor in this intra-party struggle: is it with the post-Clinton Democratic Establishment or is it with the 'return to FDR' wing.



Letters from Club Members

Pam and Stephen Nagler *had the following letter published in the Courier March 6*

A matter of interest for those who care about conserving our local desert:

Last Monday, February 24, in a special meeting, our public-elected board of

Merrill King had the following letter published in the *Courier March 13*“

People and candidates often say that we should elect someone because he/she is in business and so could handle public affairs more efficiently than your ordinary run-of-the mill citizen – or that government ought to be run like a business. Well, the reply to that has just been furnished by our President.

This country is woefully unprepared for the new coronavirus. One of the reasons for that dangerous lack of preparation is that (among other agencies) Trump dismantled the Pandemic Response Unit, the global health security unit of the National Security Council. This unit was charged with developing plans to combat outbreaks such as the one we are now facing, and coordinating the response to them.

When asked why he disbanded that unit, Trump responded “I’m a business person – I don’t like having thousands of people around when you don’t need them. When we need them, we can get them back very quickly.”

That is a good business answer. It is not the formula for governing, for running a government whose task is not to balance the books, but to provide welfare and safety for its citizens. We might as well disband the military when no war is going on. In times of crisis, it is impossible to re-boot the entire unit as quickly as a wink.

Governing well is one thing – running a business is quite another.

Marta Duran had the following letter published in the *Los Angeles Times March 28*

Some are proposing that the people most vulnerable to COVID-19 be sequestered and monitored so the rest of the country can resume going to work.

According to another article in the L.A. Times, in Madrid, several people were found dead in their beds in a nursing home for the elderly. Apparently they had been abandoned and left to die. Bodies were found at other nursing homes.

Segregating certain parts of the population while life goes on as before for others would have to be handled very carefully in this pandemic. Too much is at stake.

Merrill Ring submitted the following letter to the *New York Review of Books* (possible publication remains to be seen).

Michael Tomasky’s *The Party Cannot Hold* [NYR, March 26] develops an excellent (though not perfect) analysis of the creation of the deep fracture within the Democratic Party. However, as happens frequently, his account of how it might be resolved leaves a lot to be desired.

Healing the division, according to Tomasky, will require the rise of a charismatic candidate who can convince each side to give up something.

For the neo-liberals (as Tomasky calls them) what must be given up is the “reflex to defer to certain corporate benefactors” and [then to] “embrace populism”. Though he makes it sound as if it were a process like giving up Scotch and embracing beer, it would not be that kind of surrender: it would be more like giving up religion and embracing atheism. To do what Tomasky asks would be giving up being a neo-liberal and becoming (what he calls) a leftist. If that were to happen, of course the fracture would be healed: there would be no more neo-liberals.

On the other hand, Tomasky would have his uniter ask the leftists to actually give up something rather than change their identity. What they would be asked to surrender is the idea that they have to oppose the neo-liberals in the name of the Democratic Party. They have to be persuaded that “the real common enemies they share with the liberals are the Republicans, the Electoral College and the Senate”. In other words, they don’t have to give up their view that the Party lost its way with the turn to neo-liberalism, that that move betrayed the Party’s roots in FDR. They merely have to avert their eyes from the fact that they share a party with Lloyd Blankfein, Michael Bloomberg, Ron Rubin, James Carville et al. Now as Tomasky notes that willed ignorance ruled the Party when it housed both “crusading liberals and reactionary segregationists”.

In the end, Tomasky doesn’t think that the leftists, the populists, are going to revert to the old days. The background conditions for that to happen are missing: then capitalism was seen as working and the party was united against Communism. The threat from the latter has hugely lessened and “There is no such agreement today” about the value of a capitalist economy. The charismatic savior has no chance.



Now YOU write!

Do so! Of course, newspapers have so many restrictions (especially space) that very worthwhile letters do not get published. But try! And if it doesn't get published there, sent it to the VV and it most likely will be published here. (Or if it does get published, send it here also and have it published again.)



Or call & Complain (or Praise)

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Newsletter Editor: Merrill Ring
m36ring@gmail.com



