

-THE VOORHIS VOICE

JUNE 2020

www.claremontdems.org



DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLAREMONT MEETINGS

FRIDAY issues 'lunches' - Zoom Meeting, Mel Boynton Organizer

MONTHLY 'LUNCHEON' - Zoom Meeting: Jason Chung of UFCW 1428 speaking on 'the Fight to Protect our Essential Workers', Friday, June 12, 2020 at noon

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - Zoom Meeting, Saturday June 20

MONTHLY MEMBERS' MEETING - Zoom Meeting: David Jette, co-founder and legislative director of Public Bank LA, will speak on 'What is a public bank, why is having one important, and how can we establish one?' at our monthly meeting Monday, June 29, 2020 at 7 pm

OTHER MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Campaign Trail

The **Democratic National Convention** originally scheduled for July 13-16 has been postponed, because of The Virus, until August. Given current plans, it will run from Monday August 17 through Thursday August 20 and will be held in Milwaukee. Given the health emergency in the country, it is possible that there will be further changes. But for now, plan to watch the events the week of August 17

Mon, **June 22** - 3pm to 5pm - Remotely with Mel Boynton. in Claremont
RSVP: <https://www.mobilize.us/swingleft/event/275994/>

Like you, I've been itching to make a difference in this election year. Here is a hands-on opportunity to write twenty letters (or more) to targeted voters in swing states. We've just been added to the Swing Left events calendar!

Other opportunities and help with the process are shown in the attachment linked here: <https://votefwd.org/>

We'll gather on Zoom and each have our batch of letters to complete. After registering through Vote Forward, you download and print your targeted letters ahead of time and provide your own envelopes and stamps. We'll chat about all things progressive as we prepare our letters - to be mailed just prior to the election.

It's fun and can make a huge difference on November 3rd. I hope you'll join me on Monday afternoon, June 22nd to help win this election!

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

The next issue of the *Voorhis Voice* will be out September 1, since the DCC will be on its traditional July and August break.

By then, a great deal will have happened in the political world. Most of what will actually come to be cannot now be known. The Virus? The state of the United States economy? The campaigns for the Presidency? The Senate races? The Black Lives Matter protests?

Labor Day weekend is the traditional start of the final push toward the election. But so much of the groundwork will have been laid over the months while the club officially goes dark.

As a result, all of the members of the club will need to (1) to keep informed about relevant events and (2) prepare yourself for your fall electoral activities

in what will be the most important U.S. election since 1932.

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. One of your major projects for the autumn would be to become a Democratic Club of Claremont activist, specifically volunteering to replace me.

Statement Regarding AB 5

At its May meeting, The Democratic Club of Claremont adopted the following statement recommending changes to AB 5:

In January 2020, AB5, became law. The bill has an admirable aim: it was designed to prevent companies from classifying workers as independent contractors in order to avoid having to pay them benefits (e.g. health insurance) that would be due them if they were classified as employees. Companies such as Uber and Lyft were the chief target of the bill, companies that seek to avoid state labor laws in the classification of individuals who work for them.

Unfortunately, the bill and thus the law has had unintended consequences, affecting both individual workers and organizations. Many organizations, which of necessity operate with gig workers – people hired for a specific short term task – cannot, under the new law, financially afford to treat those people as employees. The organizations must then not employ them at all, causing the workers to lose work and the companies to not be able to function without them. Paid political campaign workers, language interpreters, newspaper carriers, musicians and music studio teachers, actors, are among the gig workers who are now finding working opportunities diminished or even eliminated. On the other hand, media companies, museums, music festivals, small non-profit theater companies cannot afford to treat many of the people they normally hire for specific times and tasks as employees and so are faced with the prospect of not being able to conduct their operations. The gig economy, for them, has been in existence a long time and is the only way for them to operate. AB5 redefined what it means to be an independent contractor. For instance, free-lance journalists, editors, photographers and bloggers cannot do more than 35 articles, photos or notes a year without being classified as an employee covered by all the labor laws of the state.

Theater companies, such as Ophelia's Jump in Claremont, cannot hire set designers, crew, directors, actors, costumers or musicians for a short period of time (say to mount the annual Shakespeare Festival at Pomona College in July). Community newspapers cannot pay columnists to write about the local music scene (or other subjects) each week as that would mean 52 articles a year which would make them full-time employees under AB5. Local historical or art museums cannot contract with curators or display designers for a particular show.

Most of these smaller organizations have existed with a mix of volunteers and freelance artists and have provided programming and services to regional

freelance artists and have provided programming and services to regional communities. They are not operating with a business model that rests on the intention of not having to pay benefits to workers and avoiding labor laws.

There are people in Claremont, even people who are members of the DCC, as well as local organizations who are having their livelihoods and their ability to function, seriously impacted by AB5. Hence it must be amended to take notice of all these independent and flexible artistic, communications, and community sustaining freelance workers. Further, it must be amended in order to preserve the organizations that cannot exist without gig workers, freelancers, independent contractors.

Summaries of Club Meetings in May

By Carolee Monroe

(1) *Friday luncheon presentation on Zoom:* The Democratic Club of Claremont's Gar Byrum Distinguished Series May Luncheon speaker was Assembly-member Freddie Rodriguez. Assembly-member Rodriguez represents the 52nd District, an area that includes communities to the east, south and west of Claremont. He is Chair of the Assembly Public Employment, Retirement and Social Security Committee.

Rodriguez addressed the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having and will have on California. Citizens and representatives are learning new ways to communicate, he said, as he shared information about hospitals, housing, employment, businesses and finances. The pandemic is expected to cost the state \$54 billion, more than twice the \$21 billion it has in reserve. The state budget process has been affected as demands for personal protective equipment, testing, loans and restrictions on socializing have impacted daily life here. Rodriguez recommended the website covid19.ca.gov for the latest information.

During the Q/A and Comments, topics included: city budgets; the Gold Line; the pandemic as a catastrophic event; the effects of AB 5; renters assistance; long-term effects on first responders and health care givers; and a focus on covid-19 related legislation.

It is expected that a recording of the event will be available to an audience as soon as the reconstruction of the club's web-site is completed.

(2) *Members' Zoom Meeting on Monday May 25:* The speaker was Andy Winnick on the topic of 'Implementing a Green New Deal in the Aftermath of the Coronavirus Pandemic with a Quick Look Back at FDR's New Deal and His Economic Bill of Rights'. As the full paper was distributed to the membership prior to the meeting and as it is too long to be printed here, no summary will be provided. Moreover, the program was recorded and can be accessed at https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/x8ZkDuuH9URLYdLt0myYB6oRBaj_X6a81HNL-6ElyEkLlg4-To1zlx55t3BwFnQt with the password 1!!F9MT9



Essays Etc. by Club Members

The following essay is part of a bigger story. We had written it a month ago and hoped to get it into the LAT. That didn't work. So we went national, trying to land it in some national publication. We had no sooner got started than there appeared in the Atlantic Monthly a piece by nationally known political commentator Ronald Brownstein making essentially the same argument (though ours was more ambitious). That ended any chance we had of national exposure. So now it is up to members of the DCC to appreciate the ideas.

Enlarging the Ticket: A Democratic Strategy

By Merrill Ring and Andy Winnick

The election presents a major problem for Democrats. On the one hand, the Republican nominee will be the current President, Donald Trump. Trump, however, is the worst president the country has ever had, an American disaster similar to Pearl Harbor and 9/11. For the good of the country (and the world) he must be defeated, the Democratic nominee must win. On the other hand, Joe Biden will be that nominee, a person with no deep support in most segments of the electorate, someone who is the party's choice because the Democratic establishment and electorate believe that he is the person best suited to doing what must be done, namely defeating the sitting president. How does the party accomplish its aim with that particular candidate?

It will require the confluence of several pieces of strategy. There is one possibility to be included among those items that has not been proposed for this election. While the ideas of announcing some Cabinet appointments ahead of a Presidential election and of having Cabinet members have a significant independent public standing have both been floated in the past, it is now time to put those suggestions into practice.

It is one of the consequences of our electoral system that we do not have, as they have in Britain, a shadow cabinet. The leader of the party out of power there is known and has appointed people to occupy cabinet positions well in advance of the election. Here, the next best thing is to have an official head of state

prior to an election. Here, the party out of power has no official head for years following an election with a new leader being chosen only months before the next election. Moreover, that nominee for the presidency is sent out to do battle in single combat – choosing later a Vice-Presidential candidate but not naming a cabinet until after the election.

The Democratic Party could break with that tradition and to some extent emulate the British system by, *in advance, publicly choosing* not just the V-P candidate but at least the central part of her or his administration. The Presidential campaign could then be conducted not as a more or less *mano-a-mano* battle but as a future administration against the current administration.

Moreover, if the Democrats would do that for the November election, given the need to defeat a national disaster with a candidate who has no deep and enthusiastic support, the candidates named to the shadow cabinet would need to be major figures within the party. We have in mind the Lincoln cabinet, called by Doris Kearns Goodwin a team of rivals. What needs to be chosen in advance is not a bunch of managerial types but the very best public figures that the Democrats have to offer. One of the outcomes of the extended and well-populated Democratic debates during the primary season was the recognition that the party has a very deep bench, many very capable figures.

Consequently, we propose that Biden make the following prospective appointments, that they be announced in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention (whatever form that takes) and that the campaign be run, not as Biden v Trump, but as a campaign of this set of Democrats (headed by Biden) v Trump.

Vice President	Elizabeth Warren
Chief of Staff	Andrew Yang
Senior Advisor to the President	Bernie Sanders
Ambassador to the UN	Barack Obama
Secretary of Defense	Kirsten Gillibrand
Secretary of Education	Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez
Secretary of Energy	Jay Inslee
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Michelle Lujan Grisham
Secretary of Homeland Security	Susan Rice
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Deval Patrick
Secretary of the Interior	Deb Haaland
Secretary of Labor	Robert Reich
Secretary of Transportation	Julian Castro
Secretary of the Treasury	Joseph Stiglitz
Secretary of the Veterans Administration	Pete Buttigieg
Attorney General	Kamala Harris
Administrator, EPA	Tom Steyer
Chair, Council of Economic Advisors	Emmanuel Saez
Department of Immigration	Pramila Jayapal
ICF	Stacey Abrams

Making, and announcing, those appointments would show that the Democrats are united in their deep opposition to Trump, in the absolute requirement that he not harm the country beyond a single term. Moreover, those names on that list would give the American people a preview of what a Biden administration would be – and that would be contrasted with Trump’s weak appointees who have no claim to independent political standing.

Of course, Joe Biden must buy into this departure from standard American practice. He is being cast as *primus inter pares*, first among equals, and not as a stand-alone figure. It is to be hoped that the Democratic Party as a whole can convince him that this is what needs to be done in order to ensure the rock-bottom need to defeat Trump is met.

Lastly, not all those possible choices will accept the role we have given them – some will more than likely want to remain in their present posts. Biden and the party will no doubt need to twist some arms – the biggest twist would be reminding them that they need to ask what they can do for their country given the Presidential crisis we are in.



Letters from Club Members

The L.A. Times asked readers to send short letters saying what they hope will happen after the pandemic, all using the above subject. Bob Gerecke (May 16) sent the letter below. The editors apparently intend to publish an article composed of these letters.

Believe it or not, I'd like to see more people meeting people they don't yet know, by sitting around large common tables in restaurants. Staying at home has made us more acutely aware of our need to connect with other humans. Waving at strangers as we pass at a distance during our walks has increased our connection to one another. We've learned to appreciate the underpaid people who work physically despite risk to serve us in many ways. Our sense of community has ironically increased. Let's keep building it. We need to stitch our county together.

Chris Naticchia had the following Viewpoint entitled 'Report from an Educator in the Trenches' published in the Courier on May 22. It is related to his campaign for election to the Board of the Cleveland Unified School District.

It's been over two months but the memory remains intense. Before there was even a stay-at-home order or talk of wearing cloth masks in public, my first adjustment was rather pedestrian: I put the winter exams for my university classes online. But when coronavirus soon made clear that our spring term would begin and end online, I realized that my colleagues and I were in store for a much more formidable challenge

In many ways, I'm lucky to be a university teacher – with the right equipment, I can work from home, with minimal risk of infection. Like many of my colleagues, however, I had never taught online courses before. I was nervous, worried – and had to learn quickly for the sake of my students. I had just acquired another job too -- “home school principal” – basically, making sure that my El Roble eighth grader did her homework, and being available to help her when she needed it. Could I handle both jobs?

The rest of the university, meanwhile, was a madhouse of activity, dealing with matters mundane and large: figuring out emergency and hazard pay for custodians, handling student grades, administering paid COVID leave, getting students laptops and hot spots. Our union, thankfully, negotiated the COVID leave, procedures for counselors to work from home -- and a week's pause in classes for us to receive online training.

Although a week is hardly enough time to build a good online course, it was certainly better than nothing, especially after emerging from an exhausting week of grading. Now each one of us faced a question that required an immediate answer. Should I teach in real-time on camera or record lectures at home for viewing later? Real-time was tempting. If we could interact with students, at least we could get a taste of the energy that drives good learning. But recorded lectures had advantages too, in particular flexibility for students whose lives and schedules had been suddenly upended. For me, the tie-breaker was the thought of my daughter barging into my office with a question (or demand) in the midst of a real-time class. I decided to record.

Were it not for my colleagues, I would have been stuck at this point. I don't consider myself particularly tech savvy, but I do have experience with Zoom and Blackboard (which provides online pages for course materials). A colleague walked me through the process of recording a lecture using Zoom while sharing my screen with my viewers, then uploading it to Blackboard.

I still struggle, though, with recording lectures. Being a philosophy professor, I rely less on lecture than Socratic discussion. There's nothing quite like the spark that occurs when students engage in a good discussion. You have to free up space for that to happen, and it's suppressed entirely if all you do is deliver content through lecture. You're also teaching reasoning skills, not recitation of bullet points. So while I do use power-point, I tend not to use it much – maybe one or two slides per class. For me that means that, for each lecture I have to record, I have to develop many more slides for each presentation, supplementing them with questions to be discussed online (to say nothing of a

supplementing them with questions to be discussed online (to say nothing of a term paper in three drafts). Many a night I'm up past 11 finishing slides and recording a lecture while, in the next room, my daughter sleeps.

In the midst of this continuous sprint, I wonder whether I've made the right choices. Some of my colleagues have made the same choices, others different ones. As we compare notes, we all have our doubts and struggles. Not all of my students participate in the online discussions, though I've extended deadlines many times. On the other hand, one of my students went to urgent care, then the emergency room – I'm sure he appreciates the flexibility.

If I have to teach online this fall (as seems likely), I'll probably teach in real-time. I miss the students and live discussion. I'll find different ways to accommodate their circumstances. As for my daughter, she's risen to the occasion, showing self-discipline, conscientiousness, independence, and maturity – she won't be interrupting me.

Bob Gerecke submitted the following letter to the Claremont Courier.

I am very glad that the letters and petitions sent to our City Council after the Agenda Packet was sent out were read aloud online during the Council meeting by the City Clerk and her assistants. This wasn't done before Council meetings were closed to public attendance and began to be offered online only. I hope that this practice will continue after the pandemic and will be extended to commission meetings. It will encourage community participation by more residents, especially by those who find it difficult to attend in person, because they will know that their input will be heard by other residents. It will also enable listeners to know what all of the other commenters are saying.

I also hope that, when reporting a petition, the clerks will report how many signatures are from people with Claremont home addresses. When almost 50% of the signatures are influenced by paid "boosters" and come from people with home addresses outside of Claremont, the total number of signatures is very misleading.



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)

MEMBERSHIP: JOIN THE DCC or RENEW

We have no corporate sponsors. Your membership dues pay all DCC's expenses which include our meeting expenses, P.O box, club charter, storage space for our booths, publicity, political donations, support for the CHS Young Democrats, and events such as Claremont's July 4th celebration and Village Venture,. Take this opportunity to renew if you haven't already done so. *Just complete and mail this form.*

Mail this form with your check to: Democratic Club of Claremont, P.O. Box 1201, Claremont, CA 91711

Individual \$30 Family \$40 Contributing \$50-99 Patron \$100-249
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The Voorhis Voice is published by the Democratic Club of Claremont, PO Box 1201, Claremont CA 91711. The newsletter's name commemorates the late Jerry Voorhis, a talented and courageous Congress member from Claremont.

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