

**Democratic Club of Big Bear Valley
General Meeting Minutes
Discovery Center, Fawnskin
March 1, 2018**

Attendance.

Attendance totaled 19, including 4 guests. (See attached.)

Call to Order.

President **Jeff Villepique** called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m., acknowledged the presence of a quorum, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome and Introduction of Guests.

President **Villepique** welcomed four guests, including the evening's speaker and her husband, **Fernando Hernadez**. Guests **Mark Bellings** and **Donna Jarvis** introduced themselves. President **Villepique** called attention to the Jim Otterstrom Memorial Silent Book Auction, which included 20 of the 60 or so books donated by member **Peggy Otterstrom** in honor of her late husband, Jim.

Guest Speaker and Q&A.

Socorro Cisneros, Democratic Candidate for California's 33rd Assembly District, thanked the Club for the invitation to speak and expressed her pleasure in the beauty of Big Bear Valley.

Candidate **Cisneros** described herself as the daughter of an immigrant, born and raised in South Central and East Los Angeles. She was a young mother at 18. While raising her own daughter, she became involved with **Cesar Chavez** and the United Farm Workers.

She worked for the Rapid Transit District (RTD) in Los Angeles for 24 years. As a result, she is a strong supporter of pension and other union benefits. Realizing its value in contract negotiations at her job, she earned a Business degree, taking a course in labor strategies, and subsequently took a more active role in that work at the RTD.

She moved to the High Desert with her husband and described the relocation as "going back in time." Missing her roots, she kept returning to LA. However, her husband admonished her to think of **Martin Luther King, Jr.** and **Cesar Chavez**, so she joined the local Democratic Club in Phelan and, after attending two meetings, became President. During her tenure, the Club grew from seven to 50 members and connected to other clubs, forming the Mountain Desert Coalition.

Candidate **Cisneros** realized that her community needs jobs. Most of the residents work only part-time, for employers like Wal-Mart; they are the working poor. She explained, as a life-long Democrat, she was shocked to discover that almost everyone in the community voted Republican. She went to Sacramento and observed Assemblyman **Obernolte** sitting and doing nothing. She decided she needed to change the situation. She worked on other's elections with Planned Parenthood and the AFL-CIO. Every interaction made her understand there are needs everywhere.

She described hers as a "grass roots" campaign. She has taken no corporate donations. "Not that they've come knocking," she explained. She stated that she doesn't want to make politics a career, but couldn't let things stay the same. She is committed to "one-on-one" campaigning. Her website is at CisnerosforAssembly.com.

Asked about her position on Cadiz, she explained that it is not only a water issue and that she is against the proposed development. She has a biologist on her campaign team and attended a “Save Our Deserts” meeting the previous evening. She explained that **Kevin DeLeon** (running against **Dianne Feinstein** for Senate) had endorsed her and donated money to her campaign, but she returned his money.

She has received the endorsement of the Democrats of the Inland Empire and the Teamsters. She is hoping for the AFL-CIO’s endorsement and plans to meet with the California Teachers Association, seeking their endorsement.

Member Comments.

President **Villepique** explained that this new part of the meeting offers an opportunity for members to comment. He said members will be hearing from more candidates at future meetings.

Secretary **Jeanne Avery** encouraged the Club to consider developing focus groups of members. For example, a focus group on the environment might be created to keep the Club informed on issues like Nestle and Cadiz.

Membership Director **Christy Jones** asked for information on Cadiz. It was explained that Cadiz is a company that wants to extract water from a desert National Monument area. It was pointed out that the federal government is actively shrinking designated National Monuments. **Gary Wolfe** offered to get a spokesperson on the issue to come to a Club meeting.

Board Reports.

1. Secretary’s Report.

Secretary **Jeanne Avery** acknowledged an amendment offered by Vice President **Brian Conley**, regarding the name of Dr. **Raul Ruiz**, and asked for approval of the General Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2018. Treasurer **Shelley Golden** moved, **Roger La Plante** seconded and the Minutes were approved, as amended.

2. Treasurer’s Report.

President **Villepique** called attention to the Club’s new Treasurer, **Shelley Golden**, explaining that she has been in charge since January. Treasurer **Golden** provided Treasurer’s reports for January and February of 2018. The Club began the year with \$1,070.39 in the bank and at the end of February had a balance of \$1,778.39, largely as the result of membership dues payments.

3. President’s Report.

President **Villepique** discussed the Club’s need to publish a new Club banner, post cards, and door hangers, among other possible items. He explained that the Club is seeking a new logo and, pointing to his graphic layout experience, said that Vice President **Conley** would help with that project.

4. Vice President’s Report.

Vice President **Brian Conley** directed attention to the prospective logo designs on display and asked members to vote their preference. He apologized for his ignorance of an earlier Club’s beautiful logo, previously designed by member **Irene Gould**. He explained that he had designed the prospective new logos because President **Villepique** was anxious for the Club to have a simplified logo that would stand out at a distance.

5. **Membership Director's Report.**

Membership Director **Christy Jones** shared that the Club's new and renewed membership includes 44 paid members. She explained that the members' new name tags had been donated by President **Villepique**. She asked that members return the tags at the end of the meeting, so that the inserts could be replaced. Her intention is to use a heavier paper and include the Club's new logo in the name tags.

6. **Media Director's Report.**

Media Director **Aleksandra Villepique** said the Club's website is still being attacked by the Russians and explained that at this time she would also address the topic "Secrets of SocialMedia," listed later in the Agenda.

Director **Villepique** addressed the question of how the Russians managed to use social media as a tool of influence. She pointed out that the main idea of social media is to help people connect globally. The downside of these connections is the proliferation of fake news. This happens because of the providers' business model. The service is free; income comes from selling ads. Advertisers use psychological tricks to hold the attention and collect data from users.

Consequences of social media use include:

- Addiction to media, i.e., nearly constant use.
- Seeing only what you want to see, i.e., the media bubble.
- Saturation from seeing the same things, requiring escalation of posts leaning to extremism.
- Exposure and exploitation by Russians and other outsiders.

Director **Villepique** said it is easy to put in an ad that looks like an ordinary post. The cost of advertising is cheap (\$5), it goes up with the number of clicks.

What can users of social media do to counteract this?

- Remove the notifications button (the numbered red circle in the upper right hand corner of the page), so that ad posts aren't noticed.
- Save and/or share only posts you have fully read and verified as to their origin.
- Ignore posts that enrage you. She stated, "The Russians principal motive is to divide us."
- When commenting, offer solutions. She said then the "trolls" will ignore you; they just want conflict.
- Socialize in person.

Director **Villepique** announced that the Social Committee will organize a workshop to help members deal with these issues.

Reports; Committees and Initiatives.

1. **Social Committee Report.**

Director **Villepique** reported for the Social Committee on behalf of Chair **Peggy Conley**. Upcoming events include Liberal Libations on March 20, the Liberal Walk on March 14 at 10 AM, plans to show *Trumping Democracy* sometime during the second half of the month, and celebrating International Day Women's Day at the Old Country Inn on March 8 at 5:30 PM. Also under consideration are a Fourth of July barbecue, a visit to Mount Wilson Observatory, and a visit to the Sam Maloof Foundation in Alta Loma. Director **Villepique**

promised the Committee will send emails with details. Chair **Conley** amended the report to include bowling planned for March 28 at 5:30 PM.

2. **Outcomes of February 23-25 California Democratic Convention.**

Vice President **Conley** shared the party's candidate endorsements. He explained that the Convention Chair had not asked for endorsements in the major races and there didn't seem to be any for Senator, Governor, Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor. He interjected that the Lieutenant Governor race is interesting in that it includes two former ambassadors. He pointed out that party endorsements essentially wipe out the unendorsed candidates.

Vice President **Conley** explained that California's "jungle" primary reduces candidates to only two from all parties combined. This can result in two Republicans and no Democrats on the General Election ballot.

Vice President **Conley** pointed out that the Club can endorse candidates and create a slate of endorsements only for those candidates not receiving state-wide party endorsement. As a Democratic Club, we must support endorsed candidates. Vice President **Conley** invited members to create an endorsement slate by forming a committee with him as the Chair. Secretary **Avery**, Social Director **Conley**, President **Villepique**, and **Gary Wolfe** volunteered to serve. Vice President **Conley** explained the committee will meet, let the Club know their choices and refer them to the group at the April General Meeting, as well as by email.

Marylyn Shubin asked if voters could vote for any candidate regardless of party registration and/or candidate affiliation. President **Villepique** said he thought that was the case, except for President, and would try to confirm that understanding. He also pointed out that **Marge Doyle** has been endorsed by the party for Congress. Vice President **Conley** promised that eventually the Club will consider local issues and candidates.

3. **Canvassing and Voter Registration.**

Voter Registration and Canvassing Co-Chair **Marylyn Shubin** reported on canvassing in Irvine, an experience she recently shared with **Jeanne Avery**, **Jeff** and **Alex Villepique**. She explained that they met at the home of **Laurel deVilla** who leads the Democratic Club of Irvine's canvassing. That club uses a database and an app on cell phones which gives canvassers a list of people to visit. She said we met some nice people and they were happy to talk. She explained that overall the responses were fantastic, because the canvassing doesn't include Republicans. She pointed out that when no one is home, the canvassers leave a door hanger and flyer.

Co-Chair **Shubin** said that we will be able to affect races in our own and other districts by hooking into this system.

New Business.

1. **April 28th Blue Wave Town Hall Lt Governors Forum**

President **Villepique** announced that the Desert Mountain Coalition (ten Democratic clubs) is holding a candidates' forum. This event is important because it gets publicity for the party's candidates. It will be held from 1 PM to 3 PM at Victorville College, 18422 Bear Valley Road, Bldg. 44, in Victorville on April 28. He asked for a donation from the Club of \$100 to support the event.

Marylyn Shubin suggested the donation might be increased to \$150 for advertising and other costs. **Roger La Plante** so moved, Vice President **Conley** seconded, and President

Villepique called for discussion on the Motion. **Marylyn Shubin** offered an amendment that the donation be increased to \$150 for advertising and other costs. It was pointed out that the media is required to publicize such events, but the local media is conservative. It was also suggested that surrogates might attend and not the candidates themselves. It was urged that the organizers get commitments to attend from the candidates. **La Plante** said the group is working to make candidates commit. He also promised that the Club's donation will be acknowledged and that it can have a presence at the event and distribute literature, as well. Both **La Plante** and **Conley** agreed to the amendment and the Motion passed, as amended, with two nay votes.

2. **Trumping Democracy Movie.**

Media Director **Villepique** described the film, explaining it was about 70 minutes long and was listed at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). She alleged it had received good reviews, but is not up-lifting. It is largely focused on how dollars are controlling politics in our country. The Social Committee has proposed the following dates for showing the film: March 23, 24, 25 30 and 31. Media Director **Villepique** asked the group to let her know which date worked best.

Call for Additional Reports or Motions.

Treasurer **Golden** reported on the events at the Thursday protest corner, calling it her "Thursday Rebellion." She described a young man who approached the group. She admitted they viewed his approach with some apprehension, not knowing why he had come to them. He introduced himself and asked if he could stand with them while his wife did their shopping. Membership Director **Jones** described a "biker guy" who cheered for them.

Voter Registration and Canvassing Co-Chair **Shubin** reminded members of the "Never Again March" to protest gun violence and seek gun control, scheduled for the 24th in Riverside. She urged participation.

Adjournment.

President **Villepique** adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Notes.

The Social Committee met prior to the General Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

After the meeting, members and guests stayed to talk, write postcards to elected officials, bid on books in the Silent Auction and enjoy refreshments.

Articles from *The Los Angeles Times* on California's "Jungle" Primary and the chance to "flip the House," the list of 2018 statewide endorsement balloting results from the California Democratic Party, and campaign material from Candidate **Socorro Cisneros** were available for distribution.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Avery
Secretary