



MINUTES OF MEETING ON AUGUST 7, 2007

Allowing a few minutes for signing in and socializing, President Joni Eisen called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

After tonight's agenda and minutes from the June meeting were approved, the Treasurer's Report told us we have \$513 in the bank after paying our bills.

The Club's (local) union-made T-shirts are in and available at the cost of \$15, sale of which will beef up the Club's coffers and enable us to broaden our T-shirt selection.

Rebecca Shearin reported on the July Dolores Park voter registration (in lieu of meeting) which proved to be more fun than anyone expected. Rebecca outlined the various upcoming registration opportunities, all of which are noted on the Club's website calendar (www.PHDemClub.org). All members are encouraged to participate in this worthy endeavor.

Agendas for upcoming meetings were announced:

- Sept. 4th:** Andrew McGuire, Executive Director of California Healthcare for All, will talk with us about AB 840 (single payer) and other healthcare plans.
- Oct. 2nd:** D.A. Kamala Harris has been confirmed as guest speaker. There will be a review of the local ballot measure and PAC recommendations, as well as an endorsement vote by Club membership. (Update: Endorsement vote will be at a special meeting, Sept. 18th. Details at the Sept 4th meeting and on the web site).

Sadly, former VP Alyssa Levine has resigned and moved out-of-state. Pat Cleveland was nominated to finish out the term and was voted in with no opposition. Her enthusiasm for the position is welcome and appreciated.

There will be a PAC meeting on the ballot measures on August 22nd at 7:30 pm at Joni Eisen's house

The evening's guest speaker, Assemblyman Mark Leno, arrived and was introduced by Ms. Eisen.

Representing the 13th District, Mr. Leno was elected to the Assembly in 2002, and is currently running for the State Senate seat presently held by Carole Migden (guest speaker at the May meeting). What followed was a lively and interesting evening covering a broad range of topics, including:

- *Brief biographical information, wherein this self-described salesman pointed out that one of the best things about public service in the "best district in the state" is being able to sell good ideas that can lead to progressive change.*

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- *Assemblyman Leno is Chair of the Appropriations Committee, a significant position that has opened his eyes to the issue of public safety in the California prison system. With no prior experience in the penal field, he is now working with what he describes as a "prison crisis." It's a vast and increasingly complex part of the State's economy and social structure. He is working with Gloria Romero of the Senate Safety Commission to hold all bills extending prison terms and fighting other "bad bills" and public policy. Because more State money is spent on corrections than higher education, 50% of the prison population is functionally illiterate, 70% has a drug or alcohol problem, and California has the highest rate of recidivism in the country. Much of the money spent on prisons comes out of social services.*
- *Because he likes his job and wants to devote more time on working with the issues than with raising the money it takes to keep him in office and in the above-referenced Chair, Mr. Leno is solidly behind the Clean Money campaign. He outlined the fund-raising process and how much time and effort it takes away from the business of running the government. He addressed the bad press he recently received regarding donations from questionable sources. He explained the misunderstanding and how it was handled.*
- *He talked about Prop 83, which addresses sexual offenses including against children, Jessica's Law, bad public policy, and its billion dollar price tag.*
- *A huge problem with the state budget, he told us, is a direct result of Schwarzenegger's rescinding the Vehicle License Fee, which he did on his first day in office, demonizing it as "the dreaded car tax." This "very progressive tax," which was originally carried in 1935, subsidizes cities and pays for things like infrastructure maintenance. In reducing it by 2/3 (from approx. \$300/year/car to its present approx. \$100/year/car), per Mr. Leno, Schwarzenegger has "squandered \$20 billion" over his term in office. The State is now experiencing a budget impasse that will result in a huge deficit.*

In the Q&A portion of the program, some of the issues raised and discussed were:

- *High-speed rail system; logistics of people-moving*
- *Carbon emission reduction; global warming*
- *Helipad issues*
- *Crime: how to be responsible without being soft? How to be unbiased while protecting people? Far right and far left have the same goals: safer communities. Be smart on crime -- other states are doing it successfully.*
- *Publicly-owned power*

It seemed the evening could go on endlessly, but Pres. Eisen called the meeting to a close around 9:00 pm. As August 7th was the night Barry Bonds hit his big homer, the fireworks were an apt punctuation.

Kate Hilsenbeck, Secretary

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