

DEMOCRATIC DIRECTIONS

City of Alameda Democratic Club

DECEMBER 2008

SPECIAL POST ELECTION ISSUE

ANNUAL
HOLIDAY
LUNCHEON
SUNDAY DECEMBER 7
NOON-3 P.M
Check page 3 for details

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENTS

For those of you who spent Election Night with us at the headquarters, nothing can match the elation, relief, and sense of history we all felt that evening. While we all took pride in being part of the effort that helped elect Barack Obama the nation's forty-fourth President, we want to take a few moments during this time of Thanksgiving to convey our appreciation for all of the efforts that went into a successful campaign in Alameda, and what it meant for us locally.

First, our successes could not have been possible without voter registration. While the exciting primary campaign and subsequent enthusiasm of President-elect Obama's nomination had a significant impact on voter registration, the voter registration forms did not fill out themselves. Thanks to the efforts of Flo and Richard Hoffman, as well as Virginia Velez and her cadre of volunteers, we saw an increase of nearly 6,500 voters in Alameda from 2006 to 2008. Incredibly, the amount of registered Democrats increased almost 4,500 in the same time frame. Even more amazingly, the number of registered Republicans in Alameda actually *decreased* by 1,000 from 2004 to 2008. Countless days registering voters at Crab Cove, shopping centers, street fairs, and other events laid the groundwork for our smashing victory.

Second, our headquarters was the focal point of all of our efforts in the fall campaign. Special thanks to NakMin Oddie for once again spending her summer break finding a location, and negotiating a good deal at that! Hopefully the real estate community will not hold our efforts in support of Measure P against us. Also, the members and volunteers who helped get the HQ up and running and kept it running deserve a *huge* thanks – Jane Brown, Sylvia Blumberg, Edith Anderson, Kathy Moore, Barbara Kahn, Lucille Cannata, Rae Lisker, Linda Mutch, Karen Green, Virginia Velez, Marzetta Carr, and many others who if we forgot to mention, we apologize. Also, special thanks to Johanne Duffy for arranging all of the food for the debates and parties.

Third, we can't forget all of the hard work we did raising money prior to this Fall. Everyone worked hard putting together memorable events like the parking lot sales, the spaghetti feed, and our amazing garden party at Ann Muir's home. It is these events that helped us pay the rent for our headquarters, shell out the deposits on the phones, and provide the seed money for our successful merchandise sales. All told, we raised close to \$30,000 for the 2008 campaign.

Having raised this amount of money, we were able to get out the vote and pay for the tools to assist us in this effort. However, no amount of money can make up for old-fashioned, grassroots people power. As such, special thanks go out to Mark Briggs and Alice Fried for organizing and training our foot soldiers who tirelessly walked precincts in support of our endorsed candidates, propositions, and measures. Also, the vast number of calls made from our office—to both Alamedans and out-of-state voters—is something we can all take pride in.

Lastly, after our club endorsed Measure P, we were called upon to help work for its passage in the face of an active "No on P" campaign that raised almost \$30,000 from a real estate lobbyist organization based in Los Angeles. We were able to distribute almost 5,000 walk pieces in support of Measure P, mail another 9,000 or so pieces, place almost the same amount of robo-calls to targeted voters the two days prior to the election, get our message out in print ads and on the street with yard signs, and hand out hundreds of election-day endorsement cards to voters as they went to the polls. Our club worked diligently in support of Measure P and the end result was passage of Measure P by a 50.84% margin, winning by only 476 votes. Also, for anyone who tells you GOTV doesn't matter, Measure P "yes" votes on Election Day were almost 1,400 more than the "no" votes.

So, for all of those who celebrated Barack Obama's victory, we are reminded of Tip O'Neill's adage that "all politics is local." Our club proved this adage this year with our work for Measure P, the re-election victory of Marie Gilmore, the election of Ron Mooney to the School Board, our voter registration efforts, and our get out the vote efforts. And for those keeping score, the turnout in Alameda was an amazing 81.69%, with

Barack Obama winning 27,449 votes (77.3%) to John McCain's 7,290 (20.6%)—with the balance of votes going to other “third party” candidates. This exceeded John Kerry's 23,984 votes and 74%, and is the best showing in Alameda for a Democratic presidential candidate since the founding of the club.

Our challenges in the coming year are different than they have been in quite some time. With tough state-level elections coming up in 2010, and a number of “hot button” local issues that might reach the ballot as early as next year, we have to keep our focus on the things that matter most to us as Alamedans. At the same time, our President-elect has challenged us to hold his feet to the fire, and keep him informed of what is important to us. President Obama faces many challenges and needs our support as he attempts to solve the nation's economic problems, disentangle the Iraq debacle, improve our image abroad, rescue our dying planet, and provide quality health care to all Americans. Lastly, we have a responsibility to all of the club members and officers who came before us to continue to build a vibrant, sustainable, ever-improving Alameda Democratic Club. So, while President-elect Obama's victory may signal the end of one effort—ending our long national nightmare—it is just the beginning of many new challenges. We look forward to working with all of you in the New Year to address those challenges. Thank you again for your ongoing support of the Alameda Democratic Club.

Rob Bonta and Jim Oddie, Co-Presidents

Our “Victory Holiday Luncheon” is at hand!

To celebrate the historic election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden, and to close out a busy, exciting year, we will come together on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m., at

our annual holiday luncheon. In addition to hearing from a special guest speaker, the '09 slate of officers will be sworn in, awards will be given to some members, and a raffle of unique items will be held. We will also recognize a special group of high school students who were very active in their election efforts through our campaign headquarters.

We will once again gather at Pasta Pelican, 2455 Marine Square Drive in Alameda, the lovely waterfront restaurant overlooking Oakland, where an elaborate luncheon buffet will be served.

Did you forget to send in your reservation and a check? The tickets are \$25.00 per person when paid in advance, but your reply must be postmarked no later than Tues., Dec. 2. The cost will be \$30.00 if paid “at the door.” After Tues., Dec. 2, please contact either Lucille at 264-0405 or Johanne at 523-3827, to reserve a space for you. When you call, be sure to leave your phone number also.

Please join us on Sunday, Dec. 7 and let's make this the merriest holiday event ever!

WHAT FUN!

Meeting People Through the Alameda Democratic Club

By

Alice Wilson-Fried

The campaign excitement all around town was palpable. Expectations were ambivalent, high one day, low the next. People experienced unprecedented political adrenaline rushes. That was the energy in Alameda during the historic 2008 presidential election.

I was born and raised in New Orleans and ever since the day my mama got the right to vote in 1964, I've been political. Yet, never in my lifetime have I witnessed such election fervor. It was as though the country woke up from a deep sleep and found itself perched on the edge of cliff about to fall. Obama threw out a rope. We all grabbed hold and pulled and tugged until November 4. What a climb up it was.

For my part, I manned the Democratic Club office on weekends selling signs and buttons, registering voters, dispensing hope and encouraging new and old patriots to volunteer. What fun! What great people I encountered.

One of my favorites was a 96 year-old Republican woman who made her daughter to take off work so that she could re-register as a Democrat. "I don't want to take a chance and die a Republican," she said. "And I sure as hell can't go to my grave knowing that I didn't do anything to keep Palin out of the White House."

Wow, I thought. What passion. What a personal stake she had in the election. That we all had.

I was touched during my tenure as a democratic worker, by the kids. One-, two-, three-, four-year-olds who could barely say Obama, but would cry out his name, though indecipherable more times than not, whenever they saw his life-size poster cut out standing in the democratic club headquarters' doorway. Proving to everyone around just how engaged and committed their parents were to avoid falling off that cliff and to taking back our country.

Another fun moment was when a lady came in, saw the cut out, and then went home to change into her favorite dress-up outfit, hat and all. To forever capture her affection and her hope, she had me snap her picture hugging Obama's image. I got goose bumps when I saw the pride radiating from her smile. All I could think of was James Brown's lyrics, I'm Black and I'm proud.

Most of all, I enjoyed meeting and getting to know those of you who have become my fellow democratic club family. Since I moved to Alameda, I've been searching for a place to fit in, for people who share my views. Who can withstand my long-winded social and political rants. Who won't hold my bossiness against me. And now that Obama has charged us to help keep him on track, and with our club goal to grow the membership, I'm looking forward to continuing our journey. To having more fun.

VOTER REGISTRATION REPORT FROM RICHARD HOFFMAN, VOTER REGISTRATION CHAIR

At over four festivals we registered 500+ people, with additional people registering at the Headquarters. Thanks to our club members and many others, for their outstanding efforts.

The following is an excerpt from an article by Joe Conason in Salon

For a broad array of editorialists, pundits and kibitzers, as well as anybody else still obsessed with old resentments against the Clintons, the weeks since Election Day have inflicted a profound sensation of cognitive dissonance, as Barack Obama kept naming the friends and allies of his former rival to run his transition and his government. Wasn't Obama the One who would exorcise the Clintonite demons from our midst and cleanse the capital of their sins?

Whatever the merits of any of the president-elect's particular personnel choices, he has hardly betrayed the faith of his supporters -- and in fact has displayed the very character and maturity that they always attributed to him. To say the least, he has showed that he cannot be swayed from exercising his own judgment by the petty backbiting of Washington at its worst.

During the process that led up to this moment, Obama no doubt understood that he would be courting disappointment or worse among those whose measure of him depended on his supposed distance from the Clintons. Having encouraged those assumptions as a matter of political necessity, he must have realized within days of his election that if he made selections based on merit, he would inevitably recruit many of the best and brightest of the last Democratic administration.

In the appointment of Hillary Clinton, he has proved as well that he is a supple thinker, capable of changing his views according to experience. To elevate the junior senator from New York into his Cabinet, Obama had to set aside the criticisms of her that he and his surrogates had voiced during the campaign.

If her experience in national security and foreign policy were as shallow as advertised back then, after all, on what basis could he offer her the position of top diplomat? If her judgment were as poor as charged by him and others over the past two years, then why would he place such heavy responsibilities on her shoulders? If her honesty were as questionable as his campaign sometimes claimed, then how can he trust her now?

The answer is not necessarily that his campaign rhetoric was false or insincere, but that he developed respect for her over the difficult months of that harsh contest -- and came to believe that she would be as formidable at his side as she was in his face.

The same contrast between then and now applies to Clinton as well, of course. To be willing to sacrifice her Senate seat -- and an apparent offer to join the Democratic leadership -- she must have come to a very different view of Obama's potential than the skepticism expressed by her and her supporters in the heat of the primary. In accepting this appointment, she will fully endorse his fitness to lead and the soundness of his worldview, without reservation. That acknowledgment goes far beyond the speeches of the general election campaign, which she delivered over and over on his behalf.

Measure P
Lena Tam, Vice-Mayor of Alameda

Thank you Alameda Democrats! During this past historical election month, you voted in favor of Measure P, the City of Alameda's real property transfer tax, which will raise the tax charged when a property is sold from \$5.40 to \$12.00 per \$1,000 of value. No one likes paying increased taxes, especially in a difficult economy, so I know this wasn't an easy vote for many people. In fact, my City Council colleagues and I would have liked to avoid placing this measure on the ballot.

Unfortunately, the magnitude of our budget problem required us to act decisively. The gap between our revenues and our expenditures was growing, despite the significant cuts we made earlier this year. As a result, we were facing the very real possibility of implementing even more draconian reductions this year and into the future. Our list of possible cuts included eliminating sworn police and fire positions, closing the Bay Farm Island branch library, and reducing programming at the Teen Center and the swim centers. We even had the closure of the Mastick Senior Center on our list of reductions to consider in the future.

Thanks for your help and your faith in the City of Alameda. Although the slowdown in the real estate market will keep the yield from the transfer tax low for now, the market will eventually recover. Once that occurs, the increase in the transfer tax will ensure that we can not only restore many of the programs we cut earlier this year, but may ultimately be able to expand those direct services that the community values like public safety, libraries, parks, and street maintenance. Eventually, as new development projects get built, new residents will be paying their share in preserving vital city services.

The ground support with walking precincts, talking to voters, mailings and lawn signs made all the difference in the very close vote. Measure P won with a margin of 536 out of 31,820 votes or 1.68%. This margin would not have been possible without the City of Alameda Democratic Club.

HELP WANTED

There is so much happening at home, here in Alameda—a new school board and superintendent, development at Alameda Point, budget woes for city and schools, as well as major events in the new administration as it unfolds in Washington and the conflict continues in Sacramento. If you have something to say to Alameda Democrats, this is the place to do it. Email any submissions for future newsletters to barbarakahn8@gmail.com. And go to our website, www.alameda-demo.org and sign up for membership.