



MAY NEWSLETTER

Issue #5

Meeting Reminder - Tomorrow, Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Please join us **TOMORROW, Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** for our monthly meeting! We look forward to seeing you all tomorrow. Click the icon below to pre-register on Zoom, or go to: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88690207867>
View the agenda to the right.



1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks from President Eric Rudin;
2. Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2024 CCDU Meeting;
3. Report from Treasurer Judy Scott;
4. Report from VP of Membership Ron Ostrin;
5. Special Guest: **Traci Park, Los Angeles City Council, 11th District;**
6. Announcements;
7. Items from the Floor;
8. Adjournment.

President's Message Eric Rudin

October 7, 2023. There are no words to describe the massacre, but I will try to share with you how it has impacted antisemitism in our local community. It's hard to focus on anything else when, as a Jew, what is going on right now makes everything else seem miniscule by comparison.

As I wrote about in [June of last year](#), CCUSD has a recent history of antisemitism. Current School Board President Kelly Kent, elevated to her role as President by Vice President Triston Ezidore and Board Member Paula Amezola despite past antisemitic conduct, has long used her position of power to promote antisemitism. Last year she used Passover and the High Holidays as opportunities to spread Jew hatred. Many in our community have been speaking at School Board meetings, Jews and non-Jews alike, begging the School Board and School District to say something so that Kent's antisemitic messages, sent while using CCUSD in her handle, are not the only ones being consumed. Publicly, we have been met with silence that grows more deafening with every passing month. Yes, Kent has First Amendment rights. But so does the rest of our School Board and those in power within CCUSD since Kent's public displays of antisemitism first arose.

More recently, Board President Kent has upped the ante. She has taken to questioning the experiences of Jewish students who have attested to the antisemitism they are living through at their schools. Then, predictably, and as so many of us have been warning, Board President Kent's messaging trickled down to the student population.

This past week, the head of a CCHS student organization, emailed our City Council asking for help to raise money the illegal encampments on the UCLA and USC campuses. I understand the student, who referenced a desire to promote peace. However, I cannot reconcile the acts and omissions of the adults in charge. Raising money for people openly flaunting antisemitic viewpoints is beyond the pale. Even worse, the student organization's efforts have been endorsed and encouraged by Board President Kent, Board Member Amezola, and City Council Candidate Bubba Fish.

We have to remember that our elections matter and that we have a historic election coming up on November 5. Let me be clear: There is nothing in politics more imperative than reelecting President Biden. Our democracy is on the ticket, and we will either vote for or against it. Locally, we will be voting for candidates to fill three City Council and two School Board seats. Our elections will define our futures both nationally and locally. We need to spread the word and fulfill our civic duty November 5. We must reelect President Biden and we must elect City and CCUSD officials who share our Democratic values.


Eric Rudin
Culver City Democrats United President

In this month's newsletter:

Announcements:
CCDU @ Culver City Car Show! Saturday, May 11, 2024

CCDU'S ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

Culver City Political History in Perspective
By Darrel Menthe

Culver City Council Turns Down Police Chase Mitigation Tool
By Jamie Wallace

WHY WE MUST ELECT JOE BIDEN!!!
By Ronald E. Ostrin



Saturday, May 11, 2024 - Culver City Car Show

Event Details:

Saturday, May 11, 2024

Downtown Culver City

9 am to 3 pm

Free Admission

The Culver City Car Show is fun for all ages, there's even live music, featuring Tom Kenny and the High Seas and The Front Yard Band! Find out more at: <https://www.culvercitycarshow.com>

We hope to see you at CCDU's booth on Saturday! Make sure to stop by and say hi (and hopefully meet some like-minded Democrats from Culver City and Los Angeles)! We have filled slots for volunteer shifts, but please feel free to swing by and volunteer day of, the more the merrier!

Don't miss the fun! We will have a booth similar to our booth at Fiesta La Ballona last year. (Photo above of Club President, Eric Rudin, and Club Treasurer, Judy Scott, at our booth at Fiesta last year!)

CCDU Turns One!

Friday, May 10, 2024



May Submissions

Culver City Political History in Perspective

By Darrel Menthe

If you are new to Culver City, you may be surprised to learn that Culver City has a long history of diverse representation at the highest levels. In 1972, Yvonne Braithewaite-Burke was elected to represent Culver City in Congress, the first Black woman to do so. She was also a trailblazer in another way: the first woman to give birth while serving in Congress. Congressmember Braithewaite-Burke was succeeded by another Black representative, Julian Dixon, whose name graces our public library where President Biden made the announcement of student loan relief this February. Dixon, in turn, was succeeded by Diane Watson, Karen Bass, and Sydney Kamlager: all Black men and women for more than half a century.

At the state level, we have similar patterns of robust leadership by men and women of color. Black men and women have been the California assembly members representing Culver City since the 1970s: Gwen Moore, Kevin Murray, Herb Wesson, Mark Ridley-Thomas, Karen Bass, Holly Mitchell, Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, Sydney Kamlager, and Isaac Bryan.

And all of them have been Democrats. It is in keeping with this history that this club recently endorsed and helped re-elect Jimmie Woods-Gray to be one of the members of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party Central Committee for our 55th Assembly District.

At the local level, Culver City has been electing Latinos and Latinas to our CCUSD school board since the 1980s, with Julie Lugo Cerra and James (“Jimmy”) Quirarte. Bernardo J. Higuera, the namesake of Higuera Street, served on the very first Culver City Council (then called a Board of Trustees) in 1917. Higuera’s family received the deed to Rancho Rincón de los Bueyes, which included the northeastern part of Culver City, in 1821.

We should know these names better because they are a significant part of Culver City’s story. We should know these names better because Black and Latino leadership matters. For decades, Culver City has been on an incredible journey of change and diversity. Culver City would not be the diverse, liberal place it is today without this historical context of real power vested in men and women of color. The struggle for equity and ending white supremacy is, of course, an ongoing struggle with advances and setbacks. Progress is never linear. In moments of frustration, however, it helps to appreciate that the struggle is not new. We can stop for a moment at the Julian Dixon library and take heart. While there will always be other “firsts” on this journey, and there will be many more in years to come, history runs deep. It is important that we Democrats in and around Culver City take the time to acknowledge and honor these trailblazers of generations before.

May Submissions

Culver City Council Turns Down Police Chase Mitigation Tool By Jamie Wallace

On April 29, 2024, the City Council voted 2-2 resulting in a failure to take action on the Culver City Police Department's (CCPD) request for a public safety tool to mitigate car chases. A motion that does not get a majority of votes does not move forward. Unfortunately, Councilmember Göran Eriksson was unable to attend.

During 2023, Culver City saw a 40% escalation in car chases. A police pursuit starts when an officer turns on the red lights and the vehicle fails to stop. The CCPD has been involved in 155 chases of vehicles over the past five years. Suspected felonies such as robbery, assault, sexual assault, and murder or misdemeanors like vehicle theft, evading arrest, impaired and reckless driving, or following a child with a car can instigate a chase. Data shows that stolen vehicles, speeding, and reckless driving violations trigger most chases. Over the last 12 months, the police have initiated 55 chases where a vehicle fled. Of those 55 cases, officers and command staff decided to break off the chase 40 times because of concern that continuing would escalate the incident and create inherent dangers to the suspect, police, other drivers, and the public. When a chase is called off, suspects escape detention or arrest. Note that with serious or violent felonies, officers are more likely to continue a pursuit. With the GPS tag, they would know where the vehicle is and continue to track it potentially resulting in an arrest without endangering others.

Of the 15 remaining police chases, 7 of them resulted in car crashes.

StarChase is a proprietary device designed to create an alternative to car chases. A small launcher is attached to the front of a police vehicle, which can fire foam darts with GPS tracking. The maximum range for attachment is 20 feet. The darts have a simple adhesive that sticks to the back of the car and allows them to be easily removed once the suspect car is located. The usage has specific limitations such as deploying a foam dart which will not dent vehicles or break windows and limiting the tracker information to the CCPD, not other agencies. It has an eight-hour battery charge. When the suspect vehicle is located, the tracker is removed. Longer-term tracking or surveillance of a vehicle requires a court warrant.

Chief Jason Sims reported that the CCPD had done extensive research into tools and technology used to mitigate police chases. The Department decided on StarChase as being the most reliable method to avoid chases, the tracker allows the police to know speed, direction, and location of the vehicle. Ensuring public and police safety is a priority of the CCPD. The Chief said that funding for this 3-year trial was already included in the budget. The cost is just under \$143,700 and includes unlimited replacement of darts. StarChase is already used in over 30 states.

During comments, Vice-Mayor Dan O'Brien asked if stationary cars would be darted. An example of a drunk driver was given. If a police officer observes reckless driving, they can pull up behind a suspect vehicle and dart it while it is stopped then safely track it without initiating a chase. By darting and then following the suspect, police can mitigate or stop a high-speed and hazardous chase. Officers could also dart a stopped car that is suspected of stalking a child. This type of activity is a misdemeanor. In other words, some misdemeanors can escalate into felonies quickly. Councilmember Albert Vera asked clarifying questions, allowing the Council and the public to get clarity on some statements by speakers and other Councilmembers.

Councilmember Freddy Puza cited worry about the extension of surveillance as a reason to disapprove of the technology. He also suggested that the scope of tracker use should be more limited. City Council candidate and public speaker Bubba Fish commented that police should not use tracker darts for misdemeanors or on stopped cars.

Mayor Yasmine-Imani McMorrin's made comments about not extending surveillance or interactions between police and non-police. In response to her question, police representatives reported that of the 15 chases, 7 resulted in a crash. Mayor McMorrin commented that having only 7 crashes did not warrant usage of this technology. It was too small of a number. Additionally, the Mayor explained that she believed that the efficacy of license plate reader installation should be studied over a longer period to see if they will mitigate the public danger of police chases.

Both Mayor McMorrin and Councilmember Puza requested changes to the tracker policy language seeming to seek a compromise. This Action Item took approximately an hour and a half of the Council and the public's time, time with the Mayor and Councilmember Puza asking for amendments to the CCPD StarChase usage policy, then voting against approval. While it is likely that this item will appear on a future agenda, in the meantime, because of the "no" votes of Mayor McMorrin and Councilmember Puza, CCPD does not have access to a tool that would save the lives of suspects, officers, pedestrians, and other drivers. Employing chase mitigation technology would prevent serious vehicle crash injuries.

Mayor McMorrin, Councilmember Puza, and Candidate Fish all want substantial funding shifted away from the police department budget to as yet undesignated projects. Such an ideological position will lead to a smaller or potentially abolished police force. Shifting funding is a theoretical and politically motivated position based on differing views. It is incomprehensible that an ideological stand would eclipse public safety.

StarChase could significantly reduce dangerous police chases, the evasion of felony and misdemeanor suspects, and maintain public safety. The discussion is available on the Culver City YouTube channel starting around 2 hours and 10 minutes into the recording or around 9:09 pm and ends around 10:30 pm. [Culver City YouTube, 4/29/24](#)

Who we elect to City Council carries significant impact, please consider this when casting your vote the November.

May Submissions

WHY WE MUST ELECT JOE BIDEN!!!

By Ronald E. Ostrin

“Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...”

Winston S Churchill, 11 November 1947

“A republic, if you can keep it.”

Benjamin Franklin's response to Elizabeth Willing Powel's question: ***“Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?”***

This November our Nation faces a choice, a choice that might determine whether our nation's 235-year experiment in Democracy may be over. That is the choice between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. For those of us who love this Country and appreciate the good luck we had in being here, we need to approach it soberly.

Because we have been a united Country from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic the United States has had more peaceful years than most other lands. We should not take that for granted. The only time there was a war on our soil in which there were tremendous losses of American life was the Civil War, where we fought amongst ourselves. Losing life on 9/11 although tragic was modest in contrast to the Civil War and the lives we lost during this Global Pandemic.

Why did our Country the richest and brightest have the highest contagion and death rate from the Pandemic in the world (4% of the World's population, 25% of the cases and 22.5% of the deaths)? It is because we had an amateur President, Donald Trump, who cared more about his political welfare than the welfare of American citizens. He never held public office before, and he was not a great businessperson. He basically was a brand and a reality TV personality. His business record is checkered with bankruptcies, and he got his start from inheriting a fortune from his father.

The Pandemic exposed his weaknesses and his inability to lead a government. If you were on a jet, would you want an amateur pilot with no experience flying it? If you were on an ocean liner, would you want an amateur Captain with no experience guiding it. Why would we want an amateur running the ship of state? His handling of the Corona Virus was incompetent, and he was incapable of learning. He could not separate the pandemic from his ego and political fortune. He mismanaged it and muddled the message that Americans needed to hear from their President.

Donald Trump has been dividing this Country. Do not take my word for it. Take the word of an American Patriot who served his Country his whole life and was Trump's Secretary of Defense. He knows Trump much better than you, or I do. He said of Trump:

“Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead, he tries to divide us,” General James Mattis wrote. “We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership.”

I am worried about our children and their future. We are fortunate that the Democrats elected Biden and Harris, and I feel safer in their hands than another four years of Trump. Trump's narcissistic personality is distorting this Country's psyche.

Joe Biden is a man of good character who cares about all Americans. He also has judgment and wisdom. Some may question his age, but I say two things. One is that I represent many elderly people and must assess their cognitive capacity. I would rank Joe Biden's cognitive capacity much higher than Donald Trump's. Also, age brings wisdom because what one loses acuity one gains in perspective. Joe Biden has done a good job since he was in office, and the complaint about inflation although real, has been brought about by the needs of the pandemic to create a social safety net and was exacerbated by the Republicans lowering of taxes for the rich.

We need Joe Biden because Donald Trump will put his own interests over our Country's. Donald Trump has trashed our country's tradition of peacefully transferring power. We can never forget how valuable and powerful that tradition is and for Donald Trump to undermine it is unforgivable.

Joe Biden may not be the perfect candidate because of his age, but he is undoubtedly the best candidate running. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Vote for Joe Biden.