



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Meeting Reminder - Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Please join us Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. for our monthly meeting! [Click here to register for the zoom.](#) Below is our Agenda:

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks from President Darrel Menthe;
2. Approval of Minutes from January 21, 2025 CCDU Meeting;
3. Report from Treasurer Judy Scott;
4. Report from VP of Membership Rafia Cooper;
5. Special Guest Speaker **Mayor Dan O'Brien**;
6. Announcements;
7. Items from the Floor;
8. Adjournment.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By President Darrel Menthe

President Musk and his orange sidekick are trying to destroy the United States. It would be dishonest to any less blunt. The only real argument is whether their motivation is the ideology of white supremacy or just greed, but it is probably both. There is no room in a column like this to detail even a small fraction of the disaster. For example, I could point out that normal people do not make nazi salutes during political speeches even accidentally, or that Republican tantrums about "DEI" sound like an old man on the streetcorner screaming the n-word. I could also spend pages talking about how absurd is to pretend that a small group of inexperienced hackers might understand how even a single government agency functions in just a couple of weeks, much less know how to reorganize them all. Just think what would happen if Musk and his team were installed in Culver City. I doubt their team would understand the differences in function between Public Works, Transportation, and the Planning Department, much less comprehend their budgets or know how to make them "better." What Musk is doing is just random destruction, like a toddler with a machete.

When I say that Trump and Musk are trying to destroy the United States, then, I don't just mean paralyzing the government and race-bating. I don't just mean making it impossible for the government to carry on the normal functions of maintaining roads, bridges, the electrical grid, and all the other systems that advanced civilization requires. I mean they are also undermining our national security and, with it, the security of the modern world.

Trump has been a Russian intelligence asset for years, although he is too feeble to know it. Remember that Trump was impeached (the first time) for threatening to withhold military aid Congress appropriated for Ukraine. When Putin lost his hold on the White House in January 2021, Russia became frustrated. Putin invaded a year later February 2022. Now that he is back in power, Trump installed a drunken nobody at DoD. He said last week that it is "unrealistic" for Ukraine not to make territorial concessions to Putin.

Now we are in the fight of our lives. The security of the modern world since 1945 has centered around one main thing: the United States and our allies containing Russian and Chinese aggression. The key is the NATO alliance, where United States, Canada, and most of Europe stand together. The NATO treaty provides that an attack on any one of the 32 NATO members is an attack on all NATO members. We have pledged our lives and our honor to defend one another to the very end. The seriousness of that promise is the deterrence that has kept Europe and America safe for three generations. General Wesley Clark told the press in February 2022 that this fight in Ukraine was "for all the marbles." Here is what he means. If Ukraine is traded away, the rest of Eastern Europe will know they are next on the auction block. Ukraine is already being sold out. If Putin is allowed to succeed in Ukraine, then smaller countries like Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and even larger ones like Poland, will soon have to make hard choices. Do they rely on the NATO alliance for their security, depending on Trump to come to their aid against Russia, or do they make their own deals with Putin? They will do the latter, of course, because nobody can trust Trump. Trump has no honor.

If Eastern Europe leaves NATO, the alliance will start to unravel. Trump has already threatened NATO so many times, unable to comprehend what it is or how it works. He is even threatening Canada and Denmark. The peril is real.

Perhaps Trump and Musk simply imagine they are respectively too old or too rich to care about the future. But we have to care. America may be the most powerful country in the world, but we will not survive alone. After all this doom and gloom, I want to end on a note of hope. None of this is inevitable. Trump has thin majorities in Congress and relatively weak public support. If Democrats stand united on defense and security, we can make a difference. Our allies are aware that Trump will not be here forever. They remember that America's commitments used to be ironclad, regardless of party. They know there are American military cemeteries on their soil. What Europe does will also depend on where they think America might be in five or ten years. Will we restore our commitments or continue down the path of isolationism and appeasement? Democrats must assure our allies that we remain committed to our collective security. Our allies are watching us.

Darrel Menthe

President

Culver City Democrats United

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADEMS VOTING IS HAPPENING NOW!

The California Democratic Party has annual conventions. Delegates are elected to those conventions from assembly districts every other year. Assembly District Elections (ADEMS delegates) will be elected this February from each Assembly District to be delegates to the California State Democratic Conventions in 2025 and 2026. Each Assembly District (AD) elects 14 delegates -- 7 “self-identified female” and 7 “other than self-identified female” -- to represent the Assembly District where they live. Culver City is entirely within Assembly District 55. CCDU is supporting the following AD55 United slate. Find out more on their website: www.ad55united.com

The ADEMS Voting
Deadline is:
February 23, 2025

If you didn't register for
an electronic ballot,
ADEMS in-person voting
is available:

**Sunday, February 23,
2025 11:00am to
3:00pm**

**Palms-Rancho Park
Branch Library**
2920 Overland Ave, Los
Angeles, CA 90064

● indicates candidate number on the ballot

AD 55 UNITED

Elect your 14 delegates to represent you in the California Democratic Party!

 JEANNINE WISNOSKY STEHLIN SAG-AFTRA GAPP & Womens Cmtes. Pres. Heart of LA Dem Club Nonprofit Exec. Director	 CRISTIAN TAFOYA Sr. Project Coordinator City Administrative Officer of LA	 ANDREW DEBLOCK Senior Advisor Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky	 ANA CARRION Chicano Latino Immigrant Democratic Club of LA County	 THUY HUYNH Los Angeles City & County Commissioner
 KEVIN LIAO Nonprofit Communications Consultant	 DARREL MENTHE Culver City Democrats United President Nonprofit Director	 LINDSAY CARLSON Culver City School Board Member	 ALLEN JAY ZIPPER Dir. Cmty. Engagement for LA City Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky, WGA Member	 JAY DAVID GREENSTEIN Democrats for Israel, LA
 CONNIE THOMAS LA County Democratic Cmte. West LA Democratic Cmte. New Frontier Democratic Cmte. West Adams Neighborhood Council	 PAMELA BETH GREENSTEIN Political Director Culver City Federation of Teachers	 CARLOS (CHARLIE) VALVERDE Teacher, Activities Director, Culver City Equity and Human Relations Advisory Cmte.	 KIMBERLEY GRIFFIN Culver City Sisters City Cmte, Heart of LA Democratic Club Black Women's Democratic Club	

Why do ADEMS matter? The short answer is that this is the way we can help select the statewide candidates for office, such as Governor in 2026. The longer answer is that in order for the California Democratic party become more responsive to all of us, we all need to become active in party systems beyond Culver City.

CCDU 2025 Executive Board

Meet Our New Board Members, Richard and Ross!

Richard Martin

Endorsement Vice President

Elected January 21, 2025 as Endorsement Vice President. Richard is a lifelong resident of Culver City. He is an alumnus of Farragut Elementary, Culver City Middle School, and Culver City High School. He stayed local for his postsecondary education by attending West Los Angeles College and graduating from University of Southern California with a degree in Business Administration. For the past 8 years, Richard has worked in the music industry and currently works as a data analyst. Since college, Richard developed a strong interest in politics and has done field organizing in both national and local races, including several campaigns in Culver City. He is often seen at various city events to support his hometown. Richard likes to play video games, traveling, and collect vinyls in his spare time. He speaks four languages and has traveled to 12 countries. Richard hopes to facilitate a friendlier environment that promotes civility and tolerance for everyone to express opinions.

Ross Piro

Community Outreach Vice President

Elected January 21, 2025 as 2025 Community Outreach Vice President. Originally from Connecticut, Ross has lived in Culver City since 2011. He attended Brown University where he earned a BA in Political Science. Having had careers in a number of fields over the years, including finance, music and advertising, Ross currently works as an actor, film producer, and real estate investor. He enjoys traveling, reading, watching English and American football, eating delicious food, and spending time with his amazing family and dog Henry. His wife Katherine runs a successful local business, and his daughters Carmen and Francesca attend Culver City High School. Ross previously served as Co-President of the Farragut Elementary Fan Club and is currently the President of the Lindberg Park Neighborhood Association. He is passionate about politics, policy, and quality of life in Culver City and honored to serve on the Executive Board of CCDU.

And Notes from Our Returning Board Members...

Darrel Menthe

President

I am looking forward to CCDU strengthening its role as an officially chartered LA County Democratic Club by responding to the challenge of the moment by building up our community within Culver City and Los Angeles County. For 2025, that means expanding our outreach in Culver City and networking within the Democratic Party. By that, I mean we must reach out to one another, in person, to add political consciousness and activity into our common bonds as friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Judy Scott

Treasurer

Besides the ongoing campaign to increase our membership, I'm most eager to plan to hold more in-person meetings and events, and increase and strengthen our partnerships and relationships with other Democratic Clubs and other Southern California elected Democratic officials.

Jamie Wallace

Secretary

I am continuing as Secretary for CCDU because last year we grew and learned so much. This year with disruption at the national level and discontent at the local level we have to work at coming together to protect and support the common good. We a great team at CCDU and can't wait to encourage our members to participate in democracy, fairness, and good governance. Divided we fall, but united we stand to help make this world a better place.

Rafia Cooper

Treasurer

I am incredibly honored to step into the role of Membership VP, with my main goal this year being to concentrate on increasing our membership and making CCDU a strong force of a club. I'm also hoping and planning to have in-person meetings and events to build community within our club.

Eli Jones

Communications Vice President

I am incredibly excited to continue doing the important behind-the-scenes work that is pivotal to CCDU's success. My main goal for this next term is to improve our newsletter, with more stories, maybe even a committee. Additionally, I'd like to up our brand ID with more social media engagement, as well as, club merchandise with our logo.