



Santa Monica Democratic Club

Newsletter

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Fall 2011

President's Welcome



Christopher Braun

By Christopher Braun

I feel privileged, as President of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, to be organizing a great group of leaders on the Executive Board and to have such a great general membership. I invite you to participate in our activities and meetings, and feel free to contact us at any time. My main goal for the group this year is to make sure we are organized and funded to have a big impact on the 2012 elections.

Big things have been happening in Santa Monica since I was elected. The biggest has been redistricting. We had a great program in May when Bob Stern came from the Center for Governmental Studies to discuss redistricting. With the maps for Assembly, Senate, and Congress being finalized, our districts have changed considerably. We will have different representation in all three when the maps take effect in 2012. Be sure to pay attention to club emails as there will be a lot of new and important information coming about elections.

I look forward to getting to know all members better over the course of the year. We have many great events planned for the rest of 2011 and early 2012. In addition to our monthly meetings (last Wednesday of each month unless a holiday), we are planning a watch (and laugh) party for an upcoming Republican debate and a luncheon featuring Sheila Keuhl. At the next event you attend, please be sure to come up and say 'hi'.

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St. John's Nurses Victorious

By Greg Heacock

As Santa Monica's community activists and residents in the Mid-City Neighborhood know, Saint John's Health Center holds a lot of sway in this town but not enough to overcome the efforts of its Registered Nurses to unionize. Undaunted by management's aggressive campaign, Saint John's Registered Nurses voted by a 64% majority— 269 to 149—to have the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United represent the 500 RNs at that hospital. Lori Hammond, an RN

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at St. John's later said, "It was harder than giving birth, but it's so worth it . . . Our future is going to be so bright- for us and for the nurses that follow us for years to come."

About a month after that struggle was won, nurses came out in force to speak before the City Council about the need to hold Saint John's Health Center to its original agreement to build underground parking on-site. They spoke with authority about how the lack of on-site parking affected patient care. Many patients with walkers and wheelchairs would park blocks away on Santa Monica Blvd., rather than pay \$13 each time they came to the Health Center. The number of visitors who would visit the sick decreased, thus compromising patient care. Additionally, nurses and other employees coming to work, who had been obliged to pay for parking away from the hospital, often found all the spaces taken so that they would have to drive and pay at another lot, often paying double their parking fee as they struggled to get to work on time. Though some council members said they were troubled by these reports, they decided it was prudent to wait until Saint John's entered Phase II of its building plans in order to see whether "shared-parking," which would use most available spaces in lots within a few blocks of Saint John's, would be the functional equivalent of building an on-site parking garage.

After City Council voted 5 to 0 in favor of an alternative to on-site parking, Saint John's unionized nurses resolved to monitor the effects of this plan and to report back to City Council each year on whether the new arrangement provides a functional equivalent of on-site parking. As for what nurses are doing right now to deal with this problem, Liz Baker-Wade

reports, "Inside the hospital, we are immediately focused on addressing patient care problems caused by Saint John's corporate administration, and their emphasis on the bottom line. We've also elected a Bargaining Team and look forward to contract negotiations."

Seeing this economic struggle as a national health problem, CNA/NNU has started a non-partisan Main Street Campaign, asking ordinary Americans to tell their stories about "where it hurts." Healthcare is no longer an issue confined to hospital care. Lizabeth Baker-Wade writes: "Santa Monicans should send us their stories at our 'Tell us wear it hurts' website: <http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/page/s/main-street-stories>."

Millie Rosenstein-Democrat

On behalf of the executive board

Millie Rosenstein, former longtime Santa Monica Democratic Club President, marked forever the club, Democratic politics generally, and local politics specifically. Her knowledge, principles and firm commitment to progressive values were always visible and shared within our community and the Democratic Party.

The force of Millie's beliefs remain embedded in our club, and the force of her personality continues to influence our direction. Her death is deeply regretted; her legacy is joyfully enduring.

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