



The Official Publication of ACT

P. O. Box 40074, (626) 795-2798

Volume 52
Number 6
July, 2024

Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer



United Dem HQ OPENS
organize. unite. vote.
United Democratic Headquarters



The United Democratic Headquarters is open for business at 400 S. Lake Avenue in Pasadena across the street from Macy's. Yes, this is the same space that we had in 2016 but double the size. And we need your help sending postcards, making calls, and going door to door for candidates. All our activities are fun and easy. Join us!



Currently, we are focusing on postcards. We are hosting postcard parties Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 am till 12:30 PM along with postcards on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 2 till 4 pm.

Would you like to make some virtual calls from the comfort of your home to Nevada? We know you want to. They are easy. You can do it. Every Wednesday night we are part of a virtual phone bank from 4:30 pm till 6:30 pm. We are calling for Susie Lee in Nevada to ensure we keep her Congressional seat blue and to ensure Biden/Harris win in Nevada.



Our headquarters has Biden/Harris lawn signs available for purchase. All money raised from the sale of signs goes to operating the headquarters and contacting voters in California Congressional races that we can flip from red to blue. And to defending Congressional and Senate seats in Nevada and Arizona. We will also be getting t-shirts, buttons, and other fun items.

Our postcard team of Karen and Katie are fabulous and have already sent over 20,000 postcards. Let's help get as many postcards sent to register voters and get Democrats to vote this fall! We can do this!

Our interns have helped us set up the headquarters, recruited neighborhood leaders for the Will Rollins campaign in Riverside County, made calls to Nevada, completed postcards and volunteered at local Democratic club gatherings. They are great.



We are happy to have Nikki Palmer Morgan on board as our illustrious and great Volunteer/Field Coordinator. Come in and say hi to Nikki and our team. We will be adding all sorts of activities and gatherings

as we get into August. Email Bill Hackett at billhackett2002@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

Headquarters is open Monday through Friday from 10 am till 8 pm; Saturday from 8 am till 4 pm; and Sunday from Noon till 8 pm. 90-minute free parking behind the building. We are between Men's Warehouse and Coldwell Banker.



Bill Hackett

~ Bill Hackett, Campaign Manager



Postcarding! Let's Register Democrats!

CA 22 Rudy Salas

CA 27 George Whitesides

CA 41 Will Rollins



We work with Field Team 6 to get every likely Democrat to register to vote in the critical November election. These 3 are important California districts we believe we can flip blue.

You can urge your friends and family to join us either by ordering postcards/addresses for them or by forwarding this email. We will be changing campaigns regularly so be on the lookout for more opportunities!

Mail these postcards as you finish them within the next month or two.

**Thank you for joining us
in saving our Democracy!**

Call or email us: ~ Karen Rowinsky
karen@karenrowinsky.com - 626-483-1135
~ Katie Dempster
kdcjic@earthlink.net - [323-363-2602](tel:323-363-2602)



Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Margaret McAustin
Joe Sadove and Jenny Genin
Roger Wolf



ACT & PADC August Meeting

Thursday, August 8, 7 p.m.

At UDH, 400 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena

Come to our ACT Steering/Pasadena Arroyo Democratic Club meeting. We will be meeting at the newly opened Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters at 396/400 S. Lake Avenue, so come and check it out.

The program will include discussion of state and local ballot measures.

Come at 7 p.m. for socializing and 7:30 p.m. for the meeting. Everyone is welcome. Mona Field will preside for ACT; Tim Wendler for PADC.



At Last – Our Redesigned Webpage

It is available now. Check it out at <https://www.actpasadena.org/>.

We think you will be pleased.



If you are unable to easily access the website with your computer set-up, Fred Register wants to know. Contact him at fred.register@Charter.net.



Special Thanks to Sustaining Members

Tanya Williams Benzinger
Jacqueline and David Jacobs
Margaret McAustin
Robin McCarthy
Lisa and Muriel Mitchell
Phlunte and Eddie Riddle
Veronica Raymond and Barry Taft
Rachel and Steve Thorsett

Wendy Cobleigh

We are saddened by the death of Wendy Tyler Cobleigh on June 19 at age 78. She was outgoing and active and fun and a great mom, an accomplished cook and generous hostess. Wendy and Don Cobleigh, her husband of 57 years, were ACT members for decades.



In addition to her work as a real estate agent, Wendy served as a board member on the Pasadena Foothill Valley YWCA, the Pasadena PTA Council, and the Armory Center for the Arts. She was perhaps proudest of her work on the City of Pasadena Community Development Committee, finding a way to save the Pasadena Train Station. She also served on the Affordable Housing Task Force, committee to integrate Pasadena, the Community Nonviolence Resource Center, the Fair Housing Council of the San Gabriel Valley/Housing Rights Center, and the Pasadena Board of Realtors' Equal Opportunities Committee and its Political Action Committee. She always worked to make positive changes in her community.

She leaves her husband Don, sons Matt (Nikki) and Ted (Julie) and daughter Molly (Dan Gildea), seven grandchildren and brother Tim Tyler. They suggest that any memorial donations go to the Pasadena Education Foundation general fund in Wendy's name.

<https://pasedfoundation.org/support/donate/>

Please contact molly@cobleigh.net for information about a memorial service on August 2.



Special Thanks to Patrons

Charles and Eileen Read

Really special thanks to Benefactors

Scott Fruin

Hon. Carol Liu (ret.) and Michael Peevey

Upcoming ACT / PADC Schedule

AUGUST -- The August ACT / PADC meeting will be on Thursday, August 8 at 7 p.m. at UDH, 400 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena. The program may include information about the State propositions.

The Research Committee will meet on Saturday, August 24 to interview candidates for PUSD Board of Trustees Seats 2, 4, and 6.

SEPTEMBER -- September ACT / PADC meeting will be on Thursday, September 5 at 7 p.m. The Research Committee report will be featured.

OCTOBER -- The October ACT / PADC meeting will be on Thursday, October 3. Members will consider any campaign contributions.



Thanks for Contributions to the Judy Boggs Intern Fund:

Sally Beer

Bill and Claire Bogaard

Karen Breau and Donald Fischer

William and Edith Byerly

Joan and Patrick Cathcart

Maggie Chamberlin

Dave Fertig and Louisa Simpson

Kathryn Fogarty

Robert Frampton and Leora Peltz

Jon Fuhrman and Susan Kane

Donald and Meg Gertmenian

Ralph Hurtado

Marilee Marshall and Bruce Wright

Dorothy Matthiessen

Nichole Mihara and Greg Harrison

Terry Nafisi

Dr. Janice Nelson and Douglas Hayes

Elizabeth Pomeroy

Janet Rose

Bob Salley

Tammy Silver

Ed Washatka and Linda Centell



Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman

Tuesday, July 16.

You may already know that ACT's web site has been dramatically upgraded and updated. You may not know (in part because we have been lax about advertising these) is that we are launching a new series of "mini-Political Notes" – we are becoming more of a blog. We already have three small Political Notes editions that you might have missed: on June 6, I wrote the success to date Wisconsin Democrats have had in organizing to flip their state legislature (<https://www.act-pasadena.org/post/political-notesby-jon-fuhrman>); on June 29, Fred Register wrote about the debate debacle that maybe won't turn out to be quite as bad as it may have seemed at the time (<https://www.act-pasadena.org/post/thoughts-on-yesterday-s-debate>); and on July 9, I wrote about the prior week's events and the Supreme Court's immunity decision (<https://www.actpasadena.org/post/high-court-makes-bad-week-worse>).

Our plan is to add "mini" editions of Political Notes at least once a week, and we welcome contributions from other ACT members. We'll try to alert you to new editions by e-mail, with a direct link, but you can just pop in to the site from time to time to see if there's a new one you missed – or add comments to one of the posts.

Now, on to this month's Political Notes. Where to start? Last Thursday, President Biden concluded the NATO conference with a strong, off-

the-cuff Q and A with the White House press corps. It wasn't perfect, but it was a solid performance without a teleprompter. On Friday, albeit with a teleprompter, he gave a rousing barnstorming campaign speech in Michigan, perhaps his best performance of the year so far. On Saturday, a twenty-year-old white Republican, for reasons unknown and perhaps inexplicable, attempted to assassinate the former President. On Monday, we get J.D. Vance as the GOP VP candidate. And in the background, a constant rising and falling buzz among the Democratic insiders – donors, party leaders, elected leaders – that Biden needs to step aside, that the ticket is doomed, that Biden will take down Democrats across the board, and that Biden has closed himself off to all but a tiny few advisors and is living in a self-imposed bubble. So let's talk about J.D. Vance, about the buzz, and about Michigan.

J.D.Vance, two years into his first term from Ohio in the Senate, brings youth and vitality to the GOP ticket. He also brings a wealth of crazy – crazy beyond crazy, which may become a huge albatross around the GOP ticket. It's not just his own brutal takedowns of Donald Trump from back in 2016 and 2017 – that Trump is America's Hitler (which actually seems fairly prescient). It's his more recent social conservatism – no abortion exceptions, even for rape or incest; that a rape victim should be obligated to bring the child to birth; that even abused wives should stay in the marriage; that gay marriage should be called into question. Donald Trump had spent a relatively successful month managing to downplay the conservative extremism of his agenda: he dissociated himself from Project 2025; he stripped the GOP Platform of any reference to personhood for embryos or extreme anti-abortion language; he denied he would support a national ban on abortion, sort of saying instead it should be left to the states.

But now Vance is on the ticket, with a wealth of

previous statements, some only months old, on the most conservative side of these social issues. It is manna from heaven for the Democratic ticket, and may be particularly effective with younger voters whose intolerance for those extreme positions – and Vance’s implicit homophobia – might be one of the drivers to get them to vote.

While all these things were happening, the buzz was a constant in the background: we’re doomed; donors are walking away; legislative leaders – even our own Adam Schiff – admit it looks grim; the polls are, at best, not encouraging (although down ballot Dems, especially key Senate candidates, seem to be holding on to their long-term leads). We are abdicating our responsibilities, letting a ticket we know for certain is going to lose – TO TRUMP – be our standard bearer because we lack the moral or intellectual courage to launch a collective revolt within the party to boot Biden from the ticket, per the buzz.

Biden is clearly hearing this. But let’s consider this from his perspective.

In 2016, he stepped aside, for many reasons, but one of which was that he was told Hillary had a better shot and it was “her turn”. We know how that turned out. In February of 2020, he was a dead man walking, yet he turned that around and won the nomination. In the fall of 2020, he was by no means a shoo-in, and few expected him to win Arizona, let alone Georgia, but he did, defying expectations. He’s been down before, and he’s gotten back up and persevered and triumphed. This is not just rhetoric – this is personal, lived experience, from 1972 when he lost his first wife and daughter in a tragic traffic accident, through the years of being a single father and a Senator, through 30 years in the Senate, through his travails with Hunter, and now. He is



indeed the only Demo to defeat Donald Trump. This time, however, he faces two opponents – Donald Trump, and time. Of the two, time is the implacable one. Can he beat time, for just four more months? Can he convince the voters that he is still up to the job, and will still be up to the job, four years hence?

As it happens, he apparently gave another rousing stump speech today in Nevada to the NAACP. But I want instead to focus on his stump speech in Detroit on Friday. It was Joe Biden at his best – animated, direct, connecting with his audience, funny, focused, engaging. If

you haven’t watched it, you should. His critics had been demanding that he show them how he was going to win the election. Implicitly, that demand had three components: what’s your vision for the future, how are you going to take down Trump, and can you convince voters that YOU personally are physically up to the task now and four years from now. No question in my mind that he did the first two; the third is more of a personal impression, but he convinced me.

He laid out his vision, using the framework of what his first 100 days in office in the new term would be like (and, although it was unstated, assuming we have a Democratic House and a Senate willing to dump the filibuster, which even with a 50-50 tie we probably will have, given that Dianne Feinstein and Kyrsten Sinema will both be gone, and they, along with Joe Manchin, were the Democratic holdouts on the filibuster). He hit all the key elements: protecting Roe, passing the John Lewis Voting Rights bill, expanding Medicare, raising the minimum wage, banning assault weapons, continuing work on clean energy and climate change, repealing the Trump tax cuts, making the child care credits permanent while

enacting a 25% minimum tax on billionaires. And it wasn't just a rote recital of a dull list; there was real passion and obvious commitment.

Then he went on to take down Trump, with facts and humor. You could see the lines that will clearly keep showing up in all his future stump speeches, because they were laugh-out-loud funny and simultaneously humiliating to Trump: that he sits in his golf cart, filling out his score card before he hits the shots; that Trump advocated fighting COVID by injecting bleach into your arm, but he apparently missed his arm and got his head instead; that Trump went bankrupt six times, including once when he owned a casino – “I didn't know you could do that – doesn't the house always win?”. He was brutally frank, flat out calling Trump not just a loser, but a rapist – quoting the New York judge who made that finding.

Lastly, the stamina issue. Biden spoke for about 40 minutes, bantering with the crowd, raising and lowering his voice, the quiet asides as if he's letting you all in on a secret, the full-throated assertions that he is in the campaign and in to win. Apparently, although I haven't had a chance to see it, he gave a similar performance at the NAACP convention today. He'll need to do this, over and over and over and over. And at some point, the issue will become Trump, and not Biden; the felon and not the grandfather; choice and not governmental prohibitions; accomplishment and not failure.

My guess is that Biden has decided, and will remain steadfast, that he is in the race, and he is in it to win. On the issues, I think we win. On the merits, we win. If we get our voters out, we win.

Maybe my optimism is getting the better of me, but I still think we keep the White House, keep the Senate, and flip the House. All our down ballot folks are running strong, our organizational efforts remain superior, and I think their

vulnerabilities exceed ours. Yes, it may be close, and it will take a huge amount of work to get our voters out, but I think we can do it and I think we will do it.

~ Jon Fuhrman



My Two Cents

by Ron Garber



One Thousand Postcard Challenge

I got involved in post carding in a big way in 2018. From the beginning I was sure it was a very positive approach to campaigning, but no one had done a study on its efficacy. When asked about that I would honestly say we didn't know, but that I believed it to be effective because it was used in conjunction with other campaign strategies. I told the volunteers to imagine that if you received a telephone call, a text, a knock on the door and a postcard it would impress on you how important it was for you to vote. Leaving out any one of these methods would diminish the effectiveness. Also, at that time call screening had started to decrease the effectiveness of the telephone, and handwritten postcards were personal in nature and more likely to be read than slick flyers that often were directly deposited in the trash.

Early on two national post carding campaigns further enhanced everyone's belief in its value. The first drive successfully flipped the Virginia Legislature from Republican to Democrat and the second inundated a single Pennsylvania Congressional district with hundreds of thousands of postcards and delivered brand new Democratic Congressman Conor Lamb. We were jubilant and the program expanded exponentially. Successes have continued on unabated through two Georgia Senatorial races, an Ohio

drive to secure women's reproductive rights and a Wisconsin election that flipped control of their Supreme Court, that figures to have dramatic implications in getting rid of gerrymandering, and like Ohio, securing women's reproductive rights. We went on to have local successes where we delivered Congressional Representatives Katie Hill and Gil Cisneros. Both were close, both were flips and I'm convinced that postcards were pivotal. At that time, I turned over the postcard program to Karen Rowinsky and she took on partner Katie Dempster. The two of them have expanded the program far beyond the initial program I had inherited from Sue Oh. The dynamic duo has amassed an Email list of active postcard volunteers totaling over 750, and through contacts with both local and national Democratic postcard organizations, carry on postcard drives year-round. They're considered to be an integral part of United Democratic Headquarters and their reports at the steering committee meetings always generate excitement for many reasons. But most importantly, they engage volunteers both year-round and throughout odd-numbered years where only special elections get scheduled.

In 2000, because of the electoral college, George W. Bush beat Al Gore by 537 votes, which was the margin originally reported and sustained by the Supreme Court in Florida. Postcards weren't a campaign thing at that time, but based on the new study, 17 postcards times 538 needed Democratic votes, leads us to believe that 9146 postcards could have flipped that outcome. Currently both the Senate and House are controlled by 51/49 percent margins and it's not inconceivable that either could be controlled by a single seat after November's election. Also, historically there are a number of Congressional races that were decided by a smaller number of votes than decided that 2000 Presidential election.

All this brings me to the crux of the matter. Believing that your individual single vote will

change the course of the world is farfetched, but knowing that 750 individuals sending out a hundred thousand postcards which can influence an additional 6000 Democratic voters to add a Senate or House seat that carries either body by a single vote is not out of the question. And if that hundred thousand can be increased up to two hundred thousand, the possibilities are naturally doubled. To that end I'm pledging to write and send at least 1000 postcards. I've already purchased the stamps, and I'm challenging you to do the same. Some of you with the will, with the time and the resources may be able to do that on your own, but that may not be necessary if you form a syndicate with your immediate family and closest friends.

Last Monday the UDH campaign office opened at 396/400 South Lake Street across the street from Macy's. It's my plan to be there most of every day writing postcards. Along with all the notices you receive from Karen and Katie, postcards, scripts and addresses will be available there. If you make it in, please search me out and let me know what your postcard plans and goals are. For those who can't make it in, feel free to email me at ronagarber@yahoo.com. You then should check my column next month when I plan to share your stories.

~ Ron out



Your Photo in *The Phoenix*

Please share a photo (of you) at an interesting place with *Phoenix* readers. Send it to Chuck at hains27@sbcglobal.net for inclusion in an upcoming issue.



**From 41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

June was an eventful month with bills moving through committees at the Capitol and events throughout the district. We finalized a state budget while navigating a deficit that still manages to put the needs of Californians first, while keeping the burden off of the tax payer. My colleagues and I listened and managed to make housing solutions, transportation expansion, education, and human services key funding priorities. Most notably, the state released funds to extend the Metro Gold Line into San Bernardino County for the first time, a project I've been championing since 1985. I am excited for us to have this win and to see this project continue to improve lives in our district.

It was my honor to receive a special recognition from My Tribe Rise at this year's Dena Juneteenth Celebration in Altadena. Each year, they come together around this historic holiday to celebrate freedom, unity, and community and it is always a pleasure to recognize the community organizations that enhance our district each day. After celebrating with My Tribe Rise, I headed down the street to Pasadena to pay homage to a building that's been a place of refuge and comradery for me since I served in my very first office nearly 36 years ago. The Jackie Robinson Community Center is a space for advocacy, recreation, service, family, and togetherness and this year we celebrated 50 years of all that it has meant for the people in the community.

Toward the end of June, it was my pleasure to have our Young Legislators join me up at The

Capitol in Sacramento for the closing out of our program for this year. Throughout my time in the Legislature, we have been able to host nearly 300 high school seniors in our program. This ambitious group of kids from across the district had the opportunity to sit in committee hearings, attend a floor session, speak with prominent staff in the legislature, and learn firsthand about the law-making process. I am proud to say that this year we had students join us who are directly benefiting from legislation I've passed and will be entering college with credits due to my dual enrollment action. There is no greater assurance as a public servant than to see our youth benefit from the hard work that my colleagues and I put in each day.

Lastly, It's that time of year again! This year's Annual Block Party and Community Resource Fair will be a very special one. I have hosted this event since I was a Councilman for District Three in Pasadena and kept it a steadfast tradition throughout all of my time in public service. This year we celebrate 25 years of bringing the community together for family fun, free backpacks and resources, and local talent. This will be my last year hosting this event as Assemblyman and I plan celebrate with my community in a big way. Join us on August 3, 2024, from 11 am-3 pm in the 500 block of Jackson St. in Pasadena, CA.

As I get ready to head back into session this August, I look forward to advancing my bills addressing lead testing in school water, wildfire prevention, digital equity, and other key problems Californians are facing. Thank you always for supporting my administration and all of the hard work my team puts in on a daily basis. It is my honor to serve the people of our community. Sincerely,
~ Chris R. Holden



**From
25th District
State Senator
Anthony
Portantino**



Dear ACT members,

It has been a tremendous honor serving in the Legislature and prior to that, on the City Council. For someone who never envisioned going into politics, I pinch myself every day for having had this tremendous opportunity. I am grateful for the many friends and neighbors who inspired me to champion small and large public policy efforts, the Armenian American and African American communities who welcomed me into their homes and churches and the many diverse cities that gave me this honor and shared their friendships.

I have always valued the direct conversations, personal relationships, and approachability, which have been central to my leadership style. From my first bill establishing California's umbilical cord blood collection program, which had its genesis in a conversation with a mom of a son whose leukemia was cured by a cord blood transplant, to the women who cornered me in the La Cañada Post Office imploring me to update California's insurance coverage for diagnostic mammograms, I have appreciated the productive constituent dialogues that have led to many of my legislative efforts. Having been invited by the Artsakh Human Rights Defender to go to Artsakh post 44-Day War, the only US politician to be so honored, is a humbling honor.

As I look back, I also get to look forward. Having personally negotiated the end of the 710-free-way tunnel with Governor Brown's administration and working with then-Mayor Tornek on legislation that paved the way for Pasadena to develop the freeway stub, it is exciting to think

about what comes next for that significant property. It is rare for a city like Pasadena to have the opportunity to plan and develop such a large and centrally located parcel of land. I cannot wait to see the vision take shape and am proud that I played a role in making it happen.

I will certainly miss being able to help the activists and city leaders in my district realize long coveted goals. Preserving the Rockhaven property and many important open spaces was just what our team did with our opportunities. Seeing the construction of sound walls in La Cañada, which were derived from policy initiatives from my term as Mayor and then realized by securing funds to build them, underscored how local efforts can lay the foundation for success. Watching the nonprofits in the 710 corridor purchasing their properties makes me smile and appreciate my staff, who worked for nearly two decades to help these benevolent organizations envision their future post-freeway threat.

Long before it was politically popular, I was able to lead gun safety efforts in the capital. Some might remember the pro-gun supporters who took the Gold Line to Old Town to protest my ban on the open carry of handguns and rifles on Main Street. I am very proud that President Biden is using my historic gun safe storage law as the model for a national effort. But frankly, it is the smaller more intimate bills that bring the widest smiles to my face. Working with local autism advocates on a six-year effort to expand autism care will positively affect countless kids. And mandatory dyslexia screening for all first graders will do the same. Following the science to move school start time later will drive up test scores and decrease many behavioral health challenges our children face post-COVID. Both efforts took me three years to garner Governor Newsom's signature. And knowing that a student in crisis somewhere in California will use the suicide hotline number on their ID makes all

the ups, downs, and struggles worth every amount of effort.

As satisfying and productive as I feel my time in office has been, I have also seen some changes within the political system that cause me serious consternation. Social media has made the political discourse far angrier and more mean-spirited. My favorite story to share was a physician who attended my own church and routinely fat-shamed me because of my gun control bills. Sadly, the targeting of LGBTQ+ children and families by extremists should trouble all of us. But my concerns are not confined to the right. When I was first elected to the Assembly in 2006, being caring, thoughtful, and effective were prized traits. Today, they are not held in the same esteem. Our political discourse is dominated now by red meat and dogma, not the art of getting things done and working collaboratively for common goals.

In closing, working at the local and state levels has been the biggest honor in my life. I deeply appreciate my talented and resolute staff, the best in California, and the many constituents who have aided my efforts and helped make our district the best in the State.

~ Anthony Portantino

Senator Anthony Portantino represents California's 25th State Senate District, which stretches along the 210 Freeway from Sunland/Tujunga to Upland



Local Democratic Summer/Fall Internships Available



The Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters (UDH) is seeking high school and college interns.

It's a chance to learn about how campaigns are run while getting valuable hands-on experience. We opened our headquarters in July, and had remote and some in person opportunities starting in June. And we go on from there.

We provide references! Gain skills and experience! Flexible hours!

Contact our Campaign Manager Bill Hackett at (626) 705-2180 or billhackett2002@yahoo.com.



Welcome New & Returning ACT Members

Shauna Clark, Pasadena
Scott Fruin, Pasadena
Scott Harden, Pasadena
Lisa Kroese, Pasadena
Lisa and Muriel Mitchell, Pasadena



Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Political Account

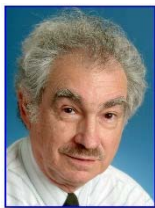
Joe Sadove and Jenny Genin
Roger Wolf



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Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



***They Would Never Hurt a Fly:
War Criminals on Trial in the Hague,*
by Slavenka Drakulić**

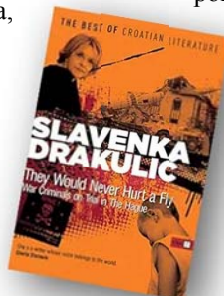
As Slavenka Drakulić writes in her preface, “Yugoslavia fell apart in a terrible and bloody war, a war that claimed some two hundred thousand lives – mostly in Bosnia – displaced two million people, and produced several new states: Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. All this happened in the middle of Europe not so long ago, between 1991 and 1995. The whole world was surprised by this war. We, the citizens of Yugoslavia, were even more surprised. Is it possible that this war crept into our lives slowly, stealthily like a thief? Why didn’t we see it coming? My generation in Europe grew up believing that, after World War II, wars of that kind could never happen again. Another argument against such a war was that in World War II in Yugoslavia, hundreds of thousands of people perished. The witnesses are still alive; the wounds are still open. And finally, we knew that Yugoslavia had no enemies. We lived peacefully with our neighbors: with Italians, Austrians, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Albanians. But one day we discovered that it is not necessary to have an outside enemy to start a war. The enemy could be inside – and indeed it was. As these newly created states at war, Bosnia, Croatia, Republika Srpska, Serbia, were led by hard-core nationalist leaders, it was soon clear that they were fighting not only for independence, but also for ‘ethnically

cleansed’; nation states. Entire regions of Croatia and Bosnia, and later on in Kosovo as well, were ethnically cleansed (a euphemism that, in practice, often meant genocide) in order to achieve homogeneous populations.”

But how could such a genocidal war get started? It is an almost incomprehensible question; but this is one of the key questions posed by Drakulić. In pondering this, she writes: “Only now can I understand how easy it is to start a war in the absence of facts. War does not come from nowhere. I saw in Yugoslavia that it must be prepared. It is easy for political leaders to use images like the ones that I remember, to use people’s emotional memory and build hatred upon it. Because in totalitarian societies, where there is no true history, each person has in his own memory a collection of such images; and it becomes dangerous if he has nothing more than that. Political leaders can appeal to those images, mix them with popular mythology, and stir emotions by repeating propaganda endlessly on television. One can hardly defend oneself against such propaganda if there is no common history that people believe in. Under the pressure of emotions, a thin layer of rationality easily falls away.”

Slavenka Drakulić was born in Rijeka, Croatia, in 1949. She studied literature and sociology. Since 1992, she has worked as a freelance writer and journalist for major international newspapers. After her criticism of nationalist government in her home country led to hostilities, she moved her base to Stockholm. Today, she lives in Sweden and Croatia. She is also the author of *Café Europa: Life after Communism*, which I read several years ago. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2022.

Slavenka Drakulić sets out to understand the people behind the horrific crimes committed during the war that tore apart Yugoslavia in the 1990s,



drawing on firsthand observations of the trials, as well as on other sources. She attended the trials, indeed spending many weeks in the courtroom in the Hague. Drakulić portrays some of the individuals accused of murder, rape, torture, ordering executions and more, during one of the most brutal conflicts in Europe in the twentieth century. Among those are former Serbian president Slobodan Milošević; Radislav Krstić, the first to be sentenced for genocide; Biljana Plavšić, the only woman accused of war crimes; and Ratko Mladić. From the numerous trials that she covered, I will describe her commentary on Slobodan Milošević.

The case of Slobodan Milošević, the former president of Yugoslavia (elected twice) and Serbia, is the first international prosecution of a former head of state for crimes committed while in office. He is charged, among other things, with committing genocide in the war in Bosnia and with crimes against humanity in the wars in Croatia and Kosovo. Milošević acted as his own lawyer during the trial. Drakulić writes, Milošević's strategy was that "he was not in court to be tried himself, but to put others on trial. There was nothing spontaneous about his performance. It was planned, with two main objectives. First, he would make the trial look like a mock trial; second, he would establish his own "truth", which was that both he and his country were victims of a conspiracy. Above all he wanted to be remembered as a champion in defense of his country." However, he had been defeated for reelection as president just a few months before he was arrested and transferred to the Hague. "In the Hague, Milošević tried to do what Serbs have always been good at: presenting themselves as victims of historical events, plots, misunderstandings, and the wrongdoings of others. And these court appearances gave him the chance to demonstrate his extraordinary ability to adapt to any new situation and use it to his advantage.

The courtroom was an international stage, he realized, and because of the media, he could play his role before the world."

The prosecution took two years to present its case in the first part of the trial, where they covered the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Milošević died before the trial's conclusion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTJKA7uBTU4> A reading from the introduction.

~ Robert V Frampton

Next Month:

The Apprentice: Trump, Russia, and the Subversion of American Democracy, by Greg Miller.

Greg Miller is National Security Correspondent for the Washington Post. Miller was among the Post reporters awarded the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of Russia's interference in the 2016 election and the fallout under the Trump administration. The title is a bit deceptive: this book has nothing to do with Donald Trump's TV show; rather it refers to his utter lack of political or governmental experience upon assuming the presidency – making Trump himself the Apprentice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKUdfFbzRgQ>
Interview with author Greg Miller.



Does ACT Have Your Current Email Address?

Please help ACT keep in regular contact by giving us your current email address, if you have one. We promise not to bombard you with email messages. We will only contact you when we need to share very important information like last-minute plan changes or events or certain deadlines.

Please share your email address with ACT Executive Director Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com (that's jon underscore fuhrman) or leave a message on ACT's answerphone, 626 795-2798.



Calendar

- August 3
Saturday
11 – 3 p.m. Chris Holden 25th Annual Resource Fair and Block Party, 500 Block of E. Jackson Street, Pasadena.

- August 8
Thursday
7 p.m. ACT / PADC Steering Committee Meeting at the new UDH, 400 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena. Program: discussion of state and local ballot measures, 7 p.m. for socializing; meeting 7:30 p.m.

- August 24
Saturday Research Committee interviews for PUSD Seats 2, 4, & 6

- September 5
Thursday
7 p.m. ACT / PADC Steering Committee Meeting. 7 p.m. for socializing; meeting 7:30 p.m.

Research Committee Calendar

The ACT Research Committee will be holding endorsement recommendation interviews for the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Trustees Seats 2, 4, and 6 on Saturday, August 24. Marilee Marshall will be sending out the details to Research Committee members and those who have expressed interest to her (send her an email to marshall101046@gmail.com).



August Phoenix Deadline

The deadline for the August *Phoenix* will be by Monday, August 12. Send items for publication to Chuck Hains at Hains27@sbeglobal.net and to Sally Beer at sally.beer125@gmail.com. (Chuck will continue to send his deadline reminder to regular contributors.)



I get most of my exercise these days from shaking my head in disbelief.



ACT and PADC Membership Dues for 2024

Have you renewed your membership(s) for 2024?? Dues categories are listed below. Note that you can STILL join both ACT and the Pasadena Arroyo Democratic Club at bargain rates. Please send your check with the form below, or renew online at our website. Many thanks to the generous folks who have already joined and renewed.



Please contact Executive Director Jon Fuhrman if you have any questions about your membership at jon_fuhrman@outlook.com or 626 864-5255.

I'd like to join both groups for one low price! (Checks payable to ACT/ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join ACT (Checks payable to ACT)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Gift Membership (NEW!) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join the Arroyo Democratic Club (Checks payable to ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

Extra Contribution

- \$ _____ Political Account (for endorsed candidates and issues)
- \$ _____ Operating Account (for organizational costs) \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

Name

Home Phone

Address

Office Phone

City

ZIP

Email address

Mail to ACT, P. O. Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074

Information you provide will be available to other members and endorsed candidates upon request.