



# El Cerrito Democratic Club

## Newsletter – March 2023

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ECDC

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# 1. El Cerrito Democratic Club General Information

The El Cerrito Democratic Club (“ECDC”) provides a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues and campaigns of local, national, and international importance. Our General Membership Meetings are open to all and held on the fourth Tuesday of each month except October and December, when we typically have our annual dinner and holiday party.

Our monthly General Membership Meetings are in a hybrid format accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remotely via Zoom. For those of us who’ve been able to come to Hana Gardens, it’s been wonderful to be in community and gather in person.

Our next monthly General Membership Meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

We encourage you to come to Hana Gardens or join the Zoom call a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

The El Cerrito Democratic Club and its activities are supported by volunteers and the annual dues of its members. Please see the “Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions” section towards the end of this newsletter for directions on how to join the ECDC or renew your membership.

Officer elections for the El Cerrito Democratic Club occur annually and were last held during the General Membership Meeting in January. Special thanks to our volunteer officers:

## El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2023)

- President – Champagne Brown
- Past President – Greg Lyman
- Executive Vice President – Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Media – Madeline Kronenberg
- VP Membership – Neil Tsutsui
- VP Programs – ***vacant***
- VP Publications – William Ktsanes
- VP Records – Leslie Reckler
- VP Treasurer – Ed Crowley

The specific duties of officer positions are described in section “VII. Officers” of the Bylaws posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>.

If you’re interested in participating more actively in the ECDC, please consider volunteering with the Club. The ECDC Executive Board has an opening for a Vice President of Programs to help arrange guest presentations for our monthly membership meetings. Please reach out to Champagne Brown or Carolyn Wysinger if you’re interested in joining. We also need volunteers for tasks and projects that arise throughout the year. *Help is always greatly appreciated!*

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

## 2. Information and Zoom Link for the General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> – *In-Person and on Zoom!*

Our General Membership Meetings are held in a hybrid format, accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and via Zoom.

Zoom Link to Join the ECDC Meeting: <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87570578180?pwd=MWN0T2hVY0VXeEhubHNoaE9xZGpKUT09>)

Zoom Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Zoom Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial in by phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Phone Passcode: 468602

Please note that the Passcode is different if you dial in by phone rather than join the meeting through the Zoom link.

### Agenda (Tentative)

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:35 pm – Approve Minutes from the February 2023 Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:38 pm – Confirmation of ECDC Officers and Signing Authorities (**Action Item**)

6:40 pm – Officer Reports: Treasurer, Membership, Programs, Publications, Media, Records

6:45 pm – Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report

6:50 pm – ECDC Diversity Committee Report

6:55 pm – Program: Congressman John R. Garamendi, US House of Representative

7:25 pm – Pre-Endorsement Conference Proposed Bylaw Changes (**Action Item**)

7:50 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

*\* Please send calendar events to the Executive Board in advance for discussion at the General Membership Meeting and publication in the newsletter.*

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

### 3. Minutes from the February 28<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting

**Meeting Minutes**  
**El Cerrito Democratic Club**

February 28, 2023

Via Zoom and In-Person at Hana Gardens

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#### **Call to Order**

President Brown called the Meeting to Order.

#### **Approve Minutes from the January 2023 Meeting (Action Item)**

The January 2023 [minutes](#) were approved with one abstention.

#### **Officer Reports**

##### Treasurer (Ed Crowley)

\$120 came in from four memberships. 2023 budget to be approved later in the meeting.

##### Membership (Neil Tsutsui not in attendance, but submits report)

There are currently 109 members.

##### Programs (Champagne Brown)

Janet's passing has left the Programs Chair vacant. Champagne Brown and Carolyn Wysinger will assume the duties until a replacement is found. Later in the meeting, the members will be polled to choose programs for 2023.

##### Publications (William Ktsanes not in attendance, but submits a report)

There is an ongoing invitation for members and supporters to submit articles, pictures and event announcements for inclusion in the newsletter. Please email your submissions to [wktsanes@gmail.com](mailto:wktsanes@gmail.com).

##### Media (Madeline Kronenberg)

The website is up to date. The newsletter is posted and Facebook has been updated with several tributes to Janet Abelson.

##### Records (Leslie Recker)

No report. (Leslie joins at 7:00 p.m)

### **DPCCC Report (Champagne Brown)**

Elections for the State Party Executive Board (E Board) were held and Michael Nye will represent us on the E Board. All committee chairs were confirmed. A 2023 Women's History month resolution was passed. Also passed was a resolution to stop the privatization of traditional Medi-Cal via the ACO Reach Program.

The California State Convention will be held in Los Angeles May 26- 28, 2023. This is a reorganization meeting, meaning a new party chair will be chosen. There is not a lot of published information on the event yet. The hotel is believed to be the JW Marriott LA LIVE near the Convention Center. Hoping for excellent room rates. Flights can be purchased now to get the best price.

### **ECDC Diversity Committee Report (Y'Anad Burrell)**

In collaboration with West County Dems, the book club will meet in late April. Ms. Burrell will give 30 days notice prior to the meeting. The club will meet in person in a cafe in El Cerrito (location to be determined). The book title is *Blessed Experiences: Genuinely Southern, Proudly Black*, authored by James E. Clybourne. [Link here to Purchase](#) (Amazon). May be available through [Link Library](#) (use your CCLIB Card).

### **Finalize 2023 [ECDC Budget](#) (Action Item; Ed Crowley)**

The finalized budget for 2023 was presented to the membership for review and adoption. On the motion of Ed Crowley and the second of Greg Lyman, the 2023 budget was approved with the additional expense of \$40 to pay for Democratic Party of Contra Costa County rechartering fee (due every two years, only in odd years). The budget was unanimously approved with no abstentions or nays.

### **2023 Monthly Programs Zoom Poll (Champagne Brown)**

Ten topics are presented to the membership. The membership votes on their favorite eight, which will become the year's programs:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Business Roundtable - 15 votes                        | 7. El Cerrito Plaza - 13 votes                    |
| 2. 2024 Elections - 15 votes                             | 8. Transit - 11 votes                             |
| 3. Gun Violence - 15 votes                               | 9. Environmental Causes/Climate Change - 10 votes |
| 4. Affordable Housing - 15 votes                         | 10. Education and Outreach - 8 votes              |
| 5. "State of El Cerrito" - 15 votes                      |   |
| 6. Presentations from Local Elected Officials - 14 votes |   |

### **Support for Older Adult Education (Linda Cain)**

On the motion of Buddy Akacic and the second of Madeline Kronenberg, ECDC will sign on to the letter penned by Older Adult Education Forever! in support of the Master Plan for Aging and the need for schools to receive funds so that older adults may continue to receive educational services. Unanimously approved. *Please see the letter included in the February 2023 ECDC Newsletter (Appendix, Page 10) in this [link](#).*

### **Nancy Gans Award Honoring Janet Abelson (Greg Lyman)**

This is a very special award and is not awarded often. Former award recipients need to be asked and consent to awarding it to a new recipient. Greg reached out to a majority of past recipients who are in agreement to award Nancy Gans to Janet Abelson. The club will give \$100 to the charity of the recipient's choice. Ruthie Abelson Olivas will revert a charity to President Brown.

### **Good of the Order**

Joanna Pace thanks all that put together the lovely ceremony for Janet Abelson and reminds us all to think of the ways that we can pick up the work Janet was carrying so that it moves forward. It is a way to honor Janet's memory.

### **Adjournment**

President Brown Adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

— Leslie Reckler, VP Records

## **4. March Program: A Conversation with Congressman John Garamendi, US House of Representatives (CA District 8)**

Please join us in welcoming Congressman John Garamendi, a Democrat who has represented portions of Northern California in the United States House of Representatives since 2009. Joining via Zoom, Congressman Garamendi will be our guest and program speaker at the March 28th El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meeting.

Congressman Garamendi served as the California insurance commissioner from 1991 to 1995 and 2003 to 2007, the US Deputy Secretary of the Interior from 1995 to 1998, and the 46th lieutenant governor of California from 2007 until his election to Congress in 2009. With his election in 2022 to represent California's newly-drawn District 8 situated between the Sacramento and San Joaquin

Valleys, he now represents much of Contra Costa County, including El Cerrito and Richmond.

Congressman Garamendi was born in Camp Blanding, Florida, and raised in Mokelumne Hill, California. He earned a BA in business from the University of California, Berkeley; an MBA from Harvard Business School; and then served in the US Peace Corps (RPCV Ethiopia, 1966 to 1968).

*From one Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (“RPCV”) to another, I thank John for his service!*

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications; RPCV Thailand (1993-1995)

### **Additional Biographical Information**

(from <https://garamendi.house.gov/about>)

Congressman John Garamendi is honored to represent California’s Eighth Congressional District, which includes much of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. He has dedicated his life to serving the people of California and, in his eighth term in the House of Representatives, he continues to advocate for working families, veterans, and Americans across the country.

Garamendi previously served four terms in the California State Senate, where he developed a state agenda to advance California’s economy and facilitate scientific research at public universities.

Additionally, he introduced legislation that would become California’s assault weapons ban – the first of its kind in the nation and still in effect today. Today, Garamendi continues his work as an advocate for gun control and remains fervently committed to keeping Americans safe.

Garamendi currently serves as the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, where he works to ensure current and former servicemembers are treated justly. He has enacted legislation empowering the military to combat climate change, improve health care for servicemembers, and provide greater legal recourse and care for those harmed by unhealthy conditions during military service. Garamendi consistently advocates for veterans and has supported every bill in the House designed to help veterans and their families.

Garamendi also serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where he uses his position to modernize America’s infrastructure, produce millions of good-paying union jobs, and revitalize California’s water resiliency efforts. With 30 years of experience in California



water issues, Garamendi is a leading advocate for a comprehensive water plan that includes water recycling, conservation, and storage to help meet California's needs.

With his eye always on the communities he represents, Garamendi's top priority is to advocate for the people of California's Eighth Congressional District and ensure they have the funding and resources necessary to thrive. Garamendi vows to never stop fighting for policies that guarantee equal rights, opportunity, and justice for every member of his community.

## **5. 2023 Pre-Endorsement Conference**

Every 2 years (odd years); El Cerrito Democratic Club participates in the California Democratic Party's (CDP) Pre-Endorsement Conferences. Each Pre-Endorsement Conference is hosted by a CDP Region(s) to consider the CDP endorsement recommendations for US House (CD), State Senate (SD), and State Assembly (AD) election contests. The Pre-Endorsement conference is a great way for clubs to ensure their voices are heard during endorsements of our legislators.

Pre-Endorsements are scheduled to take place October 21-22 (location TBA) ahead of the State Democratic Convention on November 17-19, where additional endorsing caucuses will be held (if needed) and ratification of CADEM Endorsements will take place. These endorsements will be used to support endorsed Democrats for the March 2024 Primary.

During Pre-Endorsement; a candidate must receive 70% of the vote to be placed on the Consent Calendar. If a candidate receives more than 50% and less than 70%, then the race will be considered at an Endorsing Caucus during the November 2023 Convention. If no candidate received over 50%, then the California Democratic Party will take the position of No Consensus. If no candidate filed, the party will take the position of No Endorsement

Each chartered club is eligible for one representative based on every twenty members in good standing living in a specific Assembly District. These members have to be Democrats and on their roster in good standing by April 25, 2023.

Each electoral district up for endorsement consideration is assigned to a specific CDP Pre-Endorsement Conference by CDP Region. It is a possibility that a district may be assigned to more than one CDP Pre-Endorsement Conference (i.e. districts shared between two counties). ECDC's Pre-Endorsement Delegate will be eligible to participate in the Pre-Endorsement Conference(s) of the relevant districts up for endorsement consideration in which they are registered to vote.

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President



## 6. El Cerrito Democratic Club 2023 Calendar of Programs

Below is the tentative “2023 Calendar of Programs” for the El Cerrito Democratic Club’s monthly general membership meetings. Thank you to all our members who provided input and suggestions. *It looks to be an exciting year ahead with many interesting and informative programs planned!*

March: Congressman John Garamendi, US House of Representatives (CA District 8)

April: Presentation on the “State of El Cerrito”

May: Transit (AC Transit & BART)

June: Gun Violence Awareness Month

July: Affordable Housing in El Cerrito

August: Development and the Proposed Library at the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station

September: Business Roundtable (with discussion of an expected 2024 ballot measure sponsored by various Chambers of Commerce and corporations seeking to make it more difficult for California cities and school districts to pass bond measures)

October: Annual ECDC Dinner

November: Election Outlook (in advance of the March 2024 Primary)

December: Annual ECDC Holiday Celebration

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President; and William Ktsanes, VP Publications

## 7. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*

**ECDC March General Membership Meeting** – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

(4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month); Congressman John Garamendi, guest speaker; hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

**Earth Day** – Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer work parties 9:00 am-12:00 pm followed by an appreciation lunch at the El Cerrito Community Center from 12:00 to 1:30 pm; to organize a work party, sign up for a work party, or to get involved in planning the event, please reach out to [earthday@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:earthday@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us); for more information visit [www.el-cerrito.org/EarthDay](http://www.el-cerrito.org/EarthDay).

**ECDC April General Membership Meeting** – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

(4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

## 8. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

Big thanks to all who have renewed their membership since January 1! If you have not yet done so, then your membership lapsed on December 31, 2022.

Now is a great time to renew online at: <https://ecdclub.org/join/>

Or by mailing a check to:

ECDC Membership  
PO Box 192  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Please note that our new dues are \$5 for students, \$15 for individual members, and \$23 for two adults at the same address. The cost for a printed hard-copy newsletter has increased to \$18 (in addition to dues). Please make checks payable to “El Cerrito Democratic Club” and provide an email address for all individual members. If you have questions, please email Neil Tsutsui at [membership.ecdc@gmail.com](mailto:membership.ecdc@gmail.com).

Thank you!

- Neil Tsutsui, VP Membership

## 9. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published monthly in advance of the General Membership meetings. ECDC members, friends and supporters are invited to submit articles and announcements regarding local issues and events of interest. Submissions should be emailed to William Ktsanes at [wktsanes@gmail.com](mailto:wktsanes@gmail.com) for review and editing.

## 10. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

Periodically the Club updates our Bylaws. The bylaws were changed in October 2018 to meet DPCCC requirements; revisions were proposed and adopted during the January 2021 and August 2022 ECDC meetings. The ECDC Bylaws are posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/>.

## Appendix - Proposed Bylaw Changes

The El Cerrito Democratic Club's Executive Board is requesting two changes to the Bylaws, including 1) changing a word in Section XI for clarity, and 2) introducing a new Section XIII regarding submission of rosters to California Democratic Party for Pre-Endorsement Delegates. The proposed changes will be voted upon at the March 28, 2023 general membership meeting.

1) The Executive Board proposes to change the word "**and**" to "**or**" in the first sentence of Section XI. The sentence currently it reads (emphasis added):

**XI. Amendments:** An amendment to these Bylaws may be considered at any member meeting in which notice is provided under Sections V.B.1(a) **and** (b).

Section V.B.1 reads (emphasis added):

**B. Notice.** Members have a right to notice and to deliberate on proposed ECDC actions.

1. *Notice Defined.* Notice exists when the text of a proposed action and its implementation plan is **either**:

- a. Mailed or electronically mailed to the members, in the ECDC News or otherwise, at least three (3) days prior to a regularly scheduled member meeting at which action is proposed, **or**
- b. presented at a member meeting, informing the members that the members will be asked to act upon the proposal at a subsequent meeting.

To be internally consistent, the Executive Board is recommending the first sentence of Section XI to read (emphasis added):

**XI. Amendments:** An amendment to these Bylaws may be considered at any member meeting in which notice is provided under Sections V.B.1(a) **or** (b).

2) The Executive Board proposes to add a new Section, Section XIII **California Democratic Party Pre-Endorsement**, to address CADEM requirements on when to submit rosters to establish pre-endorsement delegates. The new section would read:

**XIII. California Democratic Party Pre-Endorsement:** A roster of the Members in Good Standing will be submitted to the California Democratic Party to establish the number of pre-endorsement delegates assigned to ECDC. Only members in good standing as defined in Section III. Membership as of the date announced by the California Democratic Party will be submitted. The pre-endorsement delegates are selected in accordance with the ECDC Standing Rules on Endorsement Procedures.