



Volume 15, Number 12-e
July 2012

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Platform

MGO NEEDS YOU TO TAKE PART IN REVITALIZING OUR CLUB.

Our club has a long and illustrious history with many accomplishments. However, in the last few years we have faced falling attendance at meetings and a drop in membership. We need a new direction, one suitable for our current times.

Recently many of you filled out a survey on the club. Please attend on Wednesday to further look into our options to change the club with changing times, to explore what the survey told us, and to help make some important decisions where the club must move.

MGO is your club. If you care about MGO and its continued existence, please join us.

Wednesday, July 25th, 7:30 P.M.
Dimond Library
3565 Fruitvale Ave.
Oakland, CA

REPORT OF THE MGO SURVEY RESULTS

By Gretchen White

Results of the June, 2012, membership survey are in, with approximately 25% of members responding. Of these, 85% have been E-Board members, 75 % have been committee members and 67% have been Club officers.

Demographics

About half of our members are between 60 and 70 years old; a little over 20% are between 40 and 49 years old and about 14 % are over 70. Years of membership ranged between six months and 30 years with 14 being the median. About 70% belong to other political and civic organizations. Those were divided fairly evenly between other Democratic organizations and various city, school and focused issue organizations. Years of involvement ranged between 30 and two with the median being three.

Over half of respondents spend their political time in organized activities followed (in decreasing order) by internet and television (equal), radio, and lectures. Fifty two percent of respondents spent most of their political time in face-to-face activities. Seventy five percent are looking for action opportunities when they get involved in political activities, followed by 58% who are interested in informing themselves on officials and issues, and 50% who are interested in deciding how to vote.

MGO involvement

Fifty four per cent of respondents attended between one and three meetings during the last twelve months. Twenty three per cent came to between four and six meetings and 10 or more meetings. Fifty per cent felt the Club was somewhat important as a source of political information; 25% felt it was “only important in terms of a few issues.”

The most frequent reason given for lack of attendance was lack of time (33%) followed by meeting place (16%), meeting time (16%) and lack of interest in the program (also 16 %.) Others mentioned schedule conflicts and lack of parking. Sixty per cent of respondents said they would be willing to take a leadership role in the Club; of those who were unwilling to do so, 50% gave as a reason, “I don’t think the Club is effective enough to warrant the time.”

Endorsement meetings were considered the most valuable and/or interesting by respondents. Members also specifically mentioned Sharon Cornu speaking about the budget, Lenny Goldberg talking about tax reform and Smith on education.

Things members appreciated about the club:

- Its venerability
- Its emphasis on City politics
- Seeing old friends
- Getting political information
- Candidate and measure endorsements
- Diversity of opinion
- Integrity and smarts of the leadership

Things members disliked about the Club:

- Lack of focus and vision
- Not enough young people
- Bad venue
- Bad website
- Meetings don't start on time
- Members' closed-mindedness
- Name of Club
- Club seems "small and weak"

Vision and purpose

Fifty eight percent of respondents felt the focus of the Club should be on a combination of state and local politics. With regard to local issues, almost 92% supported focusing on government transparency/accountability/corruption, followed by 58% who supported a focus on education, and 33% on criminal justice. Forty one per cent of respondents supported other local issues including crime, "hot topics," electing good people, environmental issues, economic development, and fairness in levying of local taxes.

Respondents were equally divided between feeling the Club should participate more with Democratic party organs. Those in favor would specifically appreciate input into the Democratic party leadership and linkage with local assemblypersons.

They would like the Club to provide more time evaluating candidates, issues and ballot measures, especially those specific to Oakland.

Fifty eight per cent of respondents feel that candidates value the Club's endorsements. Among the comments to this questions were, "They probably used to when the Club was more vital," "The Club has a long-storied name and tradition," and "Candidates want ANY endorsements."

Seventy two per cent of respondents said they did not know if the Club is effective in dealing with issues. Those feeling it is not (9%) said it is because of lack of participating members; lack of members understanding how the Club gets involved

with issues; inability or unwillingness of Club to keep focus on an issue long enough; and failure of Club to develop policy positions. One respondent felt that the Club had been effective on the issues of transparency, police and corruption.

Seventy five percent of respondents felt monthly meetings should have a featured speaker; 58% felt the focus should be on community problems and 41% felt we should address specific issues. Second in preference to featured speakers was meet and greet/Q and A with candidates. Seventy per cent would prefer to hear elected officials versus academics or other experts. Other suggestions for monthly meetings include leaving time in every meeting to hear what members propose; organizing actions in support of candidates; leaving time for socializing or having more socials; and making an announcement of what other Democratic political activities are scheduled that month.

Housekeeping: venue, money, contact

Venue was deemed “very important” by a third of respondents, “a lot” by a quarter, and “somewhat” by the rest. Easy parking was cited by 75% of respondents as their specific need with regard to location. Comments included wanting a “nice place; that “most members are in North Oakland,” and that the venue should be “safe and central.”

Ninety per cent of respondents would be willing to pay higher dues (\$10 to \$25) for a nicer location. Respondents were somewhat interested in a social hour before meetings (36% versus 27%- but note that only 11 people answered this question) and 36% also said “yes, if there were food and drink available.” Sixty per cent are not interested in a pot-luck dinner (again, only 10 respondents) and 60% would be more likely to come to meetings where food and drink were offered (again, 10 respondents.) Respondents are equally divided as to whether Club dues are too low or just right. Fifty six per cent feel the Club should engage in more fund raising activities. If a substantial amount of money were to be raised, respondents felt like it should be spent on (roughly in order, at least the first few) campaigns and events, better meeting place, distributing ballot recommendations, a scholarship, “getting the word out,” putting on forums re MGO issues, “recruitment of members, renting campaign space, donation to local candidates, printing and distributing slate cards” and Oakland schools.

Respondents overwhelmingly prefer to be contacted by email, followed way behind, by phone. Of the respondents who answered whether they read the Platform each month, all do. Seventy five percent find it sometimes useful and informative; 25% find it so often. Respondents indicated it would be more useful to them if there were reports of the Executive Board actions, if there were background information on the upcoming general meeting, if we had long-range information on club meetings and

activities and if it included an array of campaign activities with dates, times and locations.

One third of respondents feel it is very important to have a column from the Club's president in The Platform; 50% feel it is somewhat important.

Seventy five percent of respondents do not post on MGO Talk, and a little more than half read posts when they get them. Forty five per cent of respondents have Facebook accounts (although only 11 people answered this question.) Seventy percent of respondents would not visit the Club's Facebook if it had an account. If it did have a Facebook account- and what should be included in a good website- are meeting dates, policy positions, endorsements, and campaign activities with date, time, location, and contact information.

Potpourri

Respondents had a number of interesting ideas to revitalize the Club. Fewer meetings, but with richer content. Local first and action-oriented. Hold joint meetings with other clubs. Get involved in more important issues. Hold meetings at OFA campaign office near 19th Street BART. Return planning to membership. Change th name of the Club. Discount multi-year memberships. Give Yung Dems who are aging out a discount membership. Better parking. Better venue. Younger members. More outreach. Year long calendar. Social programming. Key political programming. And special for board members: 100% wanted board meeting to be held from 6 to 7:30 before the membership meeting, and 86% were in favor of having "pre-meeting business" done via email prior to the board meeting.

Caveat: This is not a survey that can stand up to rigorous scrutiny. Many respondents did not answer all questions, so many items had just a handful of respondents. After I got the first seven responses, I altered the questionnaire to correct for some unintelligible questions. I did the best I could to incorporate those seven respondents' results into the overall results, but they were not officially tallied. However, by my accounting they didn't change the outcomes much.

If you want to look at all the results, including individual answers to "other" questions, go to:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/Home_Landing.aspx?sm=9rVpr8QcZK3OEF9g6dy1XTiSoHJw0FvG6t%2bV95nNpgU%3d

When you are asked for sign in, it's MGOClub and the password is Oakland. Click on New Survey, then on "analyze results," then on "all pages."



Call yourself a Democrat? Get out there and prove it by getting involved!!!

Abel Guillen, MGO member endorsed by MGO for the 18th AD race, has asked for our help with his campaign, to do phone banking and precinct walking. The weekly schedule is:

- Saturday precinct walking: 10 till 2
- Sunday precinct walking: 12 till 4
- M/T/W/Th phone banking: 5:30 to 8:30

Campaign office is 1773 Broadway in Oakland. [Call Mira at 703 731 3786](tel:7037313786) for more information.

Dan Kalb, MGO member and board member, is conducting his campaign for City Council in District 1:

- Volunteer mobilization August 4, 11 a.m. at Dan's house, 5109 Manila at 51st. Food and drink, good conversation and planning for volunteer activity;
- Dan's 53rd Birthday Fundraiser, August 14th, minimum donation \$53; contact Dan for further information at dan@dankalb.net.

Barbara Parker, City Attorney running for re-election, is conducting her campaign kick-off .

For more information about volunteering, contact her campaign at Barbara.parker2012@gmail.com; to donate, go to [parkerfor cityattorney.com](http://parkerforcityattorney.com).

Safe California Act, the initiative which replaces the state's death penalty with life without parole and which MGO endorsed, is moving its campaign into high gear and needs funding and volunteers. To contribute, contact Beth Weinberger at bethw0104@mindspring.com