



Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club
PO Box 11622
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Platform

Volume 15, Number 17-e
February 2013

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To submit articles or information to the *Platform*, send to Judy Cox at above address.

MGO'S Crime Series Continues with a Look at...

How Effectively Do the Police, the D.A, the Public Defenders, the Probation Officers and the Juvenile Court Work Together To Deal With Crime?

Our next presentation in the crime series is about Interagency Coordination and Cooperation. Our invited speakers include:

- Chief of Police Howard Jordan,
- District Attorney Nancy O'Malley,
- The Alameda County Public Defender's Office,
- Chief Probation Officer LaDonna Harris, and
- Juvenile Justice Judge Rhonda Burgess.

To begin to be heard on crime in Oakland we all need to know who the players are and whether they are working together. We hope to see you there.

Temple Sinai
28th and Webster in downtown Oakland

7:30 pm, Thursday, February 21st.

Record Crowd Hears Journalists Gammon, Johnson and Drummond Talk About Impact of Media Coverage on Crime in Oakland

By Judy Cox

In mid-January, journalists Bob Gammon of the East Bay Express, Tammerlin Drummond of the Oakland Tribune, and Chip Johnson of the San Francisco Chronicle spoke to 150 people at an MGO Democratic Club meeting about crime and the media in Oakland.

MEDIA AND CRIME

- All three agreed that the media do report extensively on crime in Oakland, in part because crime sells newspapers. Crime reporting is sensationalized, but that is the practice in most cities. Drummond noted that readers are interested in crime because they want to know what is going on and how to keep safe.
- The result of this extensive crime coverage is that the media present a negative view of Oakland.
- Most newspapers and other media outlets have lost large numbers of staff in recent years: the East Bay Express has five staff to research and write all articles, the Tribune has one third the number of reporters it had in recent years, and the Chronicle has fewer as well. Fewer reporters means that crime reporting is less likely to get beyond the gory details into looking at the causes of crime; presenting information on the causes of crime is more difficult and time-consuming than just reporting the event, Gammon noted, although he and Drummond reported that their papers do write about gun availability, poverty and its impacts.
- Drummond made an interesting point: reporters base their perceptions about crime on their own experience with crime; for example, as a resident of East Oakland, Drummond is familiar with crime going on in her neighborhood and its impact on her neighbors.

OPD AND CRIME

- The media run into obstacles when trying to get information about crimes. City officials don't provide enough information on crime because they don't know the answers and sometimes give the impression that they don't want to give information to the media.
- The columnists reported that Oakland Police Dept. does not do data research, so they don't know who commits crimes, the patterns of criminal activity, etc. Johnson noted that OPD investigates less than one third of the homicides.
- OPD is not effective, the three writers stated, because they are not able to analyze crime events or to focus, because of so many crises such as the Occupy situation and the non-compliance with the Ryders cases requirements. That in turn means there is no comprehensive strategy for dealing with crime.
- Another lack in the OPD approach to crime is that there is not enough research about what has worked in the past to reduce crime.
- Oakland has had a two-decade-long reduction in youth crime, reported Gammon: crime in Oakland is done by adults, not predominately by youth.

CRIME AND OAKLAND CITIZENS

- Citizens of Oakland also bear some of the responsibility for the lack of focus: the city is diverse but is also divided and filled with in-fighting.
- OPD gets mixed messages from the public: some think the police are too soft on crime and others believe officers are brutal and prejudiced.

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- Johnson reported that he thinks Oaklanders are “numb” to violence. They do not want to become involved because of it.

HOW TO IMPROVE THE CRIME SITUATION

- All three panelists agree that Oakland needs more cops, more crime lab technicians, and fewer sworn officers doing desk jobs.
- Oakland needs to accept the County’s offer to join its crime lab with the County’s lab.
- Leadership in the fight against crime should come from the Mayor’s office, from a crime coordinator and from OPD and city officials keeping on top of it;
- Drummond supports bringing in the Wasserman group and its consultant Bratton to analyze the Oakland situation and to find out what’s already being done effectively in other cities.
- We need to ask “What does violence reduction mean?” Drummond wants the city to collect results data to determine if any of the violence reduction programs are actually achieving goals.
- Lax federal control of gun sales has led to a proliferation of guns in Oakland.

President’s Message

Crime Series Kick-Off an Outstanding Success

I’m still fizzy from the success of our program last week, our panel with newspaper reporters Tammerlin Drummond from The Trib, Bob Gammon from The East Bay Express, and Chip Johnson from The Chron. Maybe you are, too. One of the things that meant most to me was praise from long-term members who said things like, “This is how we used to be.”

There were about two hundred people there, most of them non-members. Councilmembers Noel Gallo and Libby Schaaf came, as well as Auditor Courtney Ruby. Several people joined the club and more wanted to be on our mailing list. After the program was over they hung around and talked and talked, and when they were finally kicked out, they hung around on the steps in the cold and talked and talked. And after that, some of them came across the street to Z Café and talked some more, Chip Johnson among them. Mehdi Zarekari, Z’s owner, kept the place open an hour past closing for us.

And, because we are now on Facebook (ta-DA!) you can see a few pictures of the event on our Facebook page, although, unfortunately they were taken by me and do leave a bit to be desired. We owe a ton of gratitude to Greg Chan and Frank Russo who pushed to have a program on crime, then pushed for a series on crime, and then suggested we start with the reporters. And to Gary Sirbu, who insisted that we meet with Greg and Frank to pick their brains while they were still smokin’ and who hammered my inchoate notes from that brainstorming session into the programs that make up the series. And to Nancy Sidebotham for contacting Bob Gammon and Tammerlin Drummond and for drenching her thousands of contacts and list serves with our press releases. And for being as fabulous a moderator as anyone could wish for.

Those of you who were there, even you jaded and well-informed members, probably learned some new disheartening information that night (you can read the highlights in Judy’s excellent summary.)The depth and breadth of the problems are staggering.

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President's message continued

We need to act as well. Linda Olvera made an impassioned plea for us to get involved- to go to the Public Safety Committee meetings, to the Finance Committees, to the Council meetings. At last night's Executive Board Meeting, we formed an Action Committee that will soon be presenting a platform on aspects of the crime problem to the membership which, if approved, we can present to the City Council and various subcommittees.

Gretchen White

WANT TO BE ON THE INSIDE ON MGO CONVERSATIONS ON-LINE?

SIGN UP FOR MGO TALK, THE CLUB CHAT ROOM:

- 1, Go to Google Yahoo Groups.
2. Go to bottom of that entry where it says "search groups" and type in MGO (NOT MGO Club).
3. Hit "search".
4. MGO will pop up at the top left side of the screen.
5. Click on "join" and fill out the information.

This information will go to our webmaster Terry Preston, who will then add you to the MGO Talk list—and you'll be free to put YOUR opinions out to your fellow clubmembers.

(This is a chat list for MGO members only. You must be a paid-up member to participate.)

CLUB VOTES FOR NO ENDORSEMENT ON ENERGY CHOICE PROPOSAL

The Club membership decided to make no endorsement on the energy choice proposal that was presented and discussed at the December meeting.

New Member Joins E-Board; Former Member Returns After a "Recess"

A new board member was voted in at our January meeting: Joanne Brown.

Joanne brings to the MGO board a combination of criminal law practice, judicial experience, leadership in the public sector, and broad experience with local, state and national judicial systems. She is a member of the Measure Y Oversight Committee. "I have been impressed with the commitment of the MGO Board and members to reestablish MGO as a strong force in progressive thinking, discussion and strategic involvement in issues at a local and state level. I think MGO has the potential and I would be pleased to contribute my time and energy to the effort through the board."

Joanne is also our new official liaison with the Alameda Democratic Committee.

Chris Dobbins is returning to the E Board after a short "recess". As many of you are aware, Chris sits on the Oakland School Board, as well as practicing law in the area.

COUNCIL MEMBER LIBBY SCHAAF HOLDS SAFE OAKLAND SPEAKER SERIES ON CRIME IN OAKLAND

District Four Councilmember Libby Schaaf is presenting a set of speakers on crime in Oakland, that coordinates very well with what MGO is doing. Councilmember Schaaf invited MGO to have a table at her first Speaker Series event last Saturday, and Judy Cox and Nancy Sidebotham went, manned the table, and gave away many schedules for our crime speaker series, as well as giving out a few membership applications. Councilmember Schaaf is going to assist us in publicizing our series. Here is Councilmember Schaaf's Safe Oakland Series:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2013, 3 TO 5 PM: ROBERT WASSERMAN

This is presented by the City of Oakland. Wasserman is the chair of the Strategic Policy Partnership, which assists public agencies, including Oakland, with policing strategy development and performance improvement. He is the author of *Guidance for Building Communities of Trust*, published by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The City Council has voted to bring in Wasserman's firm to consult with the City on police reforms.

MARCH DATE AND LOCATION TBA: ANDREW PAPACHIRISTOS

Andrew Papachristos is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Yale University, whose research focuses on social networks, neighborhoods, street gangs, and interpersonal violence. His analysis is currently being used as part of Oakland's Ceasefire program.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH, 2013 7 TO 9 PM: JUSTIN MCCRARY

Justin McCrary is a Professor at the U.C. Berkeley School of Law, Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research (Cambridge) and a Fellow at the Criminal Justice Research Program, Institute for Legal Studies (Berkeley). HE is co-author of *The Effect of Police on Crime: New Evidence from U.S. Cities, 1960-2010*.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013, 7 TO 9 PM: JOHN J. DONOHUE, II

John J. Donohue III is a renowned empirical legal scholar currently teaching at Stanford Law School. For decades, Donohue has used empirical analysis to gauge the impact of law and public policy in a wide range of areas, from civil rights and employment discrimination to school funding and crime control.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2013, 7 TO 9 PM: KEVIN GRANT, PASTOR ZAC CAREY & KYNDRA SIMMONS

Oakland Street Outreach Coordinator Kevin Grant works with residents in some of Oakland's toughest neighborhoods, connecting them with vital City services. He also works as a speaker and trainer with several criminal justice organizations. He is a recipient of the 2012 California Peace Prize. Pastor Zac Carey leads True Vine Ministries in West Oakland. A community organizer and advocate, Carey also founded S.A.V.E. (Soldiers Against Violence Everywhere), a citywide grassroots organization which provides resources and solutions for a more peaceful Oakland. Kyndra Simmons is a first responder from Caught in the Crossfire, which provides counseling and assistance to violent crime victims and works to prevent retaliatory violence.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013, 7 TO 9 PM: GERALD CHALEFF

Gerald Chaleff is a Police Administrator and Special Assistant for Constitutional Policing in the Los Angeles Police Department. Chaleff has also served on the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners. He is a former President of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and served as Deputy General Counsel to the Webster Commission, which examined the LAPD's response to the 1992 riots. HE is a nationally recognized expert in criminal defense, and has provided legal analysis for a variety of news media on high profile criminal cases.

**MOST SPEECHES WILL BE HELD AT HOLY NAMES UNIVERSITY,
VALLEY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS,
3500 MOUNTAIN BLVD., OAKLAND 94619**

EBoard Meeting Jan 14, 2013

Present were: Howard Egerman, Frank Russo, Judy Cox, Joe Trapp, Nancy Sidebotham, Greg Chan, Jim Mordecai, Steve Statler, Gretchen White, Joanne Brown and Gary Sirbu.

This was a particularly frisky board meeting as we were still heady with the success of last week's panel on The Press' View of Crime. Briefly, topics covered included:

- Results of the election on Community Choice Aggregation
- Logistics for up-coming programs like better sign-in procedures, greeters, brochures
- Videotaping and posting the programs
- Ideas for next year's series, possibly schools and education
- The decision to have a group that will meet to work on media/social media and communication.
- The formation of an Action Committee that will formulate a Club platform on aspects of the crime problem to present to the membership and which, if approved, which we can present to the City Council and various subcommittees.
- Approval of recommendation to club members of a proposed club bylaw change which will require the notice to the members of any complex or controversial public policy position coming up for a vote must state the arguments for and against the proposed position.

COME TO AN EBOARD MEETING! ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO MGO BYLAW ARTICLE VI

For Consideration at the February 21, 2013 Membership Meeting

Article VI of the MGO bylaws currently reads in its entirety:

VI – ADOPTION OF A PLATFORM

1. A platform is a formal position taken by the membership of MGO.
2. A platform may be presented to the membership for voting by the Executive Board or any club member in good standing.
3. The text of any platform shall be mailed to the membership at least 14 days prior to the general or special membership meeting at which the platform is to be considered.
4. A platform plank shall be adopted only by a majority of those voting.

Proposed Change to Article VI, Subsections 2 and 3

The Executive Board recommends that language, of sections 2 and 3 of Article VI, appearing in boldface, be modified as follows:

2. A **proposed** platform may be presented to the membership for voting by the Executive Board or any club member in good standing.
3. The text of any **proposed** platform shall be mailed to the membership at least 14 days prior to the general or special membership meeting at which the platform is to be considered. **If the proposed platform is complex, or if it is controversial within the club or within the general community, the president, in consultation with the executive board, shall promptly act to ensure that the arguments on all sides of the issue are included in the notice mailed to the membership. The final**

determination of whether the arguments fairly represent all sides of the issue shall rest solely with the president. No vote on the proposed platform shall occur unless the notice is in conformity with this requirement.

Reasons for Proposed Change

Club members have the right to review the arguments for and against any proposed platform before it voting on whether to accept or reject it. The suggested amendments will ensure that the membership receives that information in writing and well in advance of the membership meeting. The amended language also protects the credibility of the club's decision-making process.

We will discuss and vote on these amendments during our February 21, 2013, general membership meeting.

Gretchen White
MGO President



Join your MGO friends before the meeting at the Z Bar, steps away from our meeting spot, at 28th and Webster, in the dealership. They serve inexpensive happy-hour drinks until 7:00 and food as well. Come schmooze with your club friends from 6:30 until 7:30!