overcome them after moving indoors to permanent housing and gaining the coordinated assistance of trained outpatient caregivers.

Caregiving is also coordinated across agencies, making it more accessible. Before this program an array of public and private agencies offered overlapping and splintered assistance. Temporary homeless shelters with curfews and little personal space were then the norm. The one lingering problem the formerly homeless seem to suffer is loneliness from living alone instead of in their street groups, but responsive housing programs create programs to compensate.

Phillip Mangano also served under President Obama, who in his administration began a program that virtually wiped out veterans’ homelessness. Homeless veterans, estimated in 2013 to number 60,000, made up about a quarter of the chronically homeless in the U.S. at that time. That program, too, stresses housing first.

Housing First programs were begun in large cities across the U.S. Salt Lake City’s homeless population is now under 100, and that city hopes to bring it to zero within a year. Very smartly, Salt Lake built permanent housing for the homeless far from their previous impoverished urban street locations. Addicts were therefore separated from their dealers and other behavioral triggers.

The 16 other cities that have adopted this
President’s Message, continued from Page 1

housing policy include Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. Alameda County, which includes both Oakland and Berkeley, has a countywide program.

On April 28, at 7 p.m., at our monthly general meeting, two administrators will talk to us about local housing programs for the homeless. They are Donna Colombo, Director of Trinity Center in Walnut Creek, and Kate Hartley, Deputy Director at the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development. Joining them will be Rossmoor CEO Tim O’Keefe, former head of Project Inc. We hope you will join us for their talks.

Best wishes, Patsy

Point of View: CA State Democratic Convention

by Sue De Carlo

I just returned from the California State Democratic Party Convention in San Jose. It was a blast, with lots of enthusiasm both for candidates and issues, and lots of young people asking you to sign a petition or dis-cuss an issue. And, most of all, lots of Democratic Party delegates who came to vote for candidates and build the party’s platform. I learned about tax rebates for the working poor and how clean energy can fulfill 50% of our energy needs right now at no more cost than traditional methods. Best of all, I got to hear the speeches. One speech in particular blew me away: It was delivered by Representative Loretta Sanchez, who for the past 12 years has represented Orange County and now running for Barbara Boxer’s seat in the U.S. Senate, against Kamala Harris.

Ms. Sanchez has a fiery style, a machine-gun delivery, and almost every sentence was about an actual accomplishment—legislation she has authored, co-authored, or voted for that has made life fairer for workers, healthier and safer for women, and has helped children prepare to take on the responsibilities of adulthood. I was impressed. Kamala Harris spoke next. She mentioned no accomplishments but spoke only of lofty aspirations and generalities including that Democrats work for people not corporations and that democratic ideals provide for people in need and for the environment. She said nothing about what she has done or hopes to do, or how she would go about doing it.

The convention endorsed Ms. Harris over Congresswoman Sanchez. I researched Sanchez and Harris at www.votesmart.org, a bipartisan group that rates the accomplishments of elected officials and candidates. Harris, as a candidate, has only two ratings, 100% from NARAL and 7% from the NRA. She has had the same two ratings from all her years as DA and as California Attorney General.

Sanchez was rated at 100% by historically progressive groups for her positions on abortion and reproductive rights; human rights; drug abuse; the economy and fiscal policy; education; campaign finance; civil liberties and civil rights; labor unions, gun control; health care; immigration; retirement issues; LGBT issues; agriculture; unemployment and low income issues; and veterans’ issues, among others.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue DeCarlo

Disclaimer: This opinion is my own; the DoR Board has not taken a position on this race.
March 24 General Meeting

The Teacher Shortage, Tenure, and School Reform in California

Two local educators will speak at the Thursday, March 24, General Meeting, which will begin with a social hour and town square at 6 p.m. in the Event Center. The presentation will begin at 7 p.m. and is free and open to everyone, regardless of political affiliation.

There will be two speakers: Brendan Hurd, President of the Walnut Creek Teachers Association, and Nick Carpenter, President of the Acalanes Educators Association. Both are local teachers.

Brendan Hurd teaches 8th grade U.S. History and a cartooning elective at Walnut Creek Intermediate, where he has taught for 17 years. He worked for many years with the California History Project at U.C. Berkeley as both a presenter and a teacher coach. In 2010 he was elected Teacher of the Year for the Walnut Creek School District. He has been active in the local teachers union since 2000 and was recently elected president. Hurd lives with his wife and daughter in Pleasant Hill and says he loves teaching in this area and being part of a strong community.

Nick Carpenter teaches Latin and Science at Miramonte High School in Orinda. He has been president of the Acalanes Educators Association for five years and participated on negotiations before that. He lives in Moraga with his wife and children.

Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Walnut Creek all fall within the Acalanes Union High School District. The district also runs an extensive adult education program. According to the Academic Performance Index, Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas, and Miramonte high schools rank in the top 60 of the 1,000 high schools in California and the top 4% of high schools in the United States.

Bring your questions for our speakers and hear all about education in our greater community.

Court Cases in the News

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments late last month in Friedrichs v. California. The heart of the case, filed on behalf of a group of public school teachers in Southern California, is whether public school teachers can be compelled to contribute dues to the California Teachers Association, which lobbies on their behalf for salaries, benefits, and a whole spectrum of classroom issues and requirements. Opponents argue that a decision in favor of the plaintiffs would cripple the CTA and greatly reduce teachers' negotiating power.

The high court is also hearing Vergara v. California. A California Superior Court ruling, in a 16-page decision, ruled that key teacher protections in California, including tenure, violate the civil rights of students in the state. The state judge found that tenure protections sent the worst teachers to the highest poverty schools, creating unequal conditions. The Los Angeles Times describes the issue in the case as a pivotal fight over the sometimes competing rights of students and teachers.
The Homeless among Us

Our April 28 Membership Meeting will feature a panel of three speakers who bring a wealth of experience and insight into efforts to help the homeless both here in Walnut Creek and in the greater Bay Area.

Trinity Center Executive Director Donna Colombo’s motto is “People Matter,” and she says she is guided by three principles in running Walnut Creek’s biggest homeless service: Focus on strengths, opportunities and aspirations to achieve results. Colombo writes that her experience as a manager, senior project manager, and program developer, along with her passion and dedication for helping clients, is enabling Trinity Center to grow and develop. (See related information about Trinity Center on page 5 of this edition of the newsletter.)

Kate Hartley is Deputy Director of the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development. Her 25 years of housing development work includes a wide range of experience. She is currently responsible for implementation of affordable rental housing programs, which include new and preserved housing for a wide range of households including homeless families and individuals, low-income working families, veterans, special needs populations, and seniors. Hartley will discuss the challenges of dealing with San Francisco’s intractable and growing homeless problem and what is being done to solve it.

The third panel member will be Rossmoor’s own Tim O’Keefe, CEO of Rossmoor. He came to Rossmoor from Shelter Inc., which recently provided assistance to almost half of Contra Costa County’s 7,000 homeless. O’Keefe says he felt connected to the 20-year-old organization’s mission to help the homeless and enhance human dignity. Before that he headed up Catholic Charities/Catholic Youth Organization in San Francisco, where he helped turn around an organization that was on the brink of bankruptcy when he joined in 2001.

Bring your questions and concerns to what is sure to be a lively panel discussion on homelessness. The social hour and town square will begin at 6, with the discussion beginning at 7. Refreshments will be served. There will be ample time for audience questions, and everyone is welcome.
Did You Know…about Our Homeless?

The 2015 Contra Costa County Point in Time (PIT) count of homeless people counted 3,715 individuals:

- 1,326 unsheltered
- 704 sheltered
- 1,685 other *

* “Other” homeless category includes people with other temporary living arrangements who are eligible for HUD funded services and who would be homeless if not for temporary accommodation the night of the count.

There were 2,914 total households; 37% were households with dependent children. Among the homeless population were:

- 690 chronically homeless
- 140 veterans
- 304 severely mentally ill
- 315 with chronic substance abuse
- 348 victims of domestic violence

From: Contra Costa County Health Services PIT Data, 2015

Turner School ~ Trinity Center

DoR’s wildly successful Turner School Project members raised tens of thousands of dollars over several years for first graders at Antioch’s Turner Elementary School. Their dinners (all lovingly homemade), rummage sales (all good-quality, lightly used merchandise), and other activities were eagerly anticipated and greatly enjoyed by our members.

But all good things must end, as did the Turner project, but only to rise phoenix-like from the ashes as the Trinity Center band of volunteers. “We kept getting together for lunch and still liked each other so much we decided to take on another project,” said the project’s head chef and chief bottle washer Emily Ehm (Emily would shun that limelight).

You may not know that our City of Walnut Creek has just under 100 known homeless men and women who struggle to find local shelter and services. The Trinity Center serves the homeless in both Walnut Creek and Central Contra Costa County, providing meals, shower and laundry facilities, clothing, a food pantry, and access to mail and a phone. Job opportunities are posted and the staff helps locate county resources, including for addiction and other issues, and connects clients with ongoing programs including Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, Covered California, and food stamps.

Trinity is open Monday through Friday for outreach and will provide overnight housing for 30 people during the coldest months of January, February, and March. It is not affiliated with any religious organization. DoR’s Trinity group, adopted by the Board as a DoR-supported charity, collects toiletries, clothing, food items, and other items and delivers them to the center. If you would like to make a donation (including cash, always in short supply), or if you would like to join this upbeat gang of merry volunteers, please contact Emily at 943-7610.
The second half of the two-year, 2015–2016, legislative session has begun. A bill can be authored and introduced by legislators in either house at any time during the session. Other legislators may show support for a bill by adding their names as co-authors. The author may withdraw a bill at any time during the review process. If a bill passes the first floor vote it is sent to the relevant committees for review and possible amendment, then back to the floor for a second vote unless a majority in the committee votes to kill it. If it passes the second floor vote it goes to the other house. If not amended or related to expenditures it may go to the other house after only one vote.

When the committees have passed a bill it is placed in the inactive file where it remains until the author brings it to the floor for a vote. If not brought to a vote it can be carried over to the next year or killed. If a bill fails at the third floor reading the author may seek reconsideration and another vote. When a bill has passed review in the originating house it is sent to the other house for a concurrence vote. It may be reviewed by committees, killed or amended. If the bill is amended in the second house it is returned to the house of origin for a concurrence vote. If there is no concurrence the bill goes to a joint committee for compromise resolution followed by another concurrence vote. If there is no compromise the bill is dead. If passed by both houses the bill then goes to the Governor who may sign it into law, allow it to become law without signature or veto. A veto can be overturned by a 2/3 vote.

Last year, 2,358 bills were under review in the legislature, and 807 passed into law; most were killed and some were carried over into 2016. Between January 1 and February 15, 2016, 464 new bills were introduced in the Assembly and 279 were introduced in the Senate. Most of the business handled during this time concerned bills that remained in the process from last year. Some bills in the inactive file have been suspended. Many votes were taken in committees and a few on the floors of both houses, but no new laws have been passed yet. There are many bills vetoed by the Governor that are waiting in the inactive file to be brought back to the floor for consideration of an override vote. The three reasons most often given by the Governor for veto are:

- There are already a number of laws on the books that handle the same situation.
- Similar laws have been overturned in other states because they violate Federal Law.
- “I don’t think this bill will be of help to anyone, so I won’t sign it.”

By February 15 Assemblywoman Katherine Baker had authored 11 bills and withdrawn 4 of them. Senator Steve Glazer had authored one bill that is still in the review process. Baker and Glazer have both co-authored or sponsored a number of other bills, which will be detailed in future articles.
Voter Reg. Effort Growing by Leaps and Bounds

DoR Voter Registration Coordinator Carol Weed reports that so far 56 volunteers have joined DoR’s voter registration efforts in this critical election year. The group has already met to map a strategy and develop tactics to register county voters who may have moved, will vote for the first time, or have not registered for some other reason.

Weed says one focus will be communities in East County, where as few as 37% of eligible voters have registered to vote. That percentage is 74% for Walnut Creek, which is close to the average in the county, but is as high as 90% or more for Orinda and Alamo.

Weed adds that the volunteers will encourage people to vote by mail. Only 31% of county voters were registered to vote by mail in 2014, especially important since vote-by-mail voters are twice as likely to vote. In Rossmoor 85% of those registered to vote voted by mail.

Ballots will be available in seven languages for the November General Election. It is also expected to be one of the longest ballots ever, with many propositions. If you’d like to join the group to help DoR’s registration drive, contact Carol Weed at carol4ofa@gmail.com.

Key Voting Factoids

1776—Only landowners may vote, overwhelmingly white men over 21
1856—Vote expanded to all white men; North Carolina last to lift land ownership restriction
1870—Denying the right to vote because of race illegal; obstacles still thrown up to block African Americans from voting
1890—Wyoming admitted to statehood and becomes first state to give women the vote
1920—19th Amendment gives women the right to vote in both state and federal elections
1965—Voting Rights Act passed, forbidding states from imposing discriminatory restrictions on who can vote; provides enforcement
1971—Voting age lowered to 18

Voter Registration Volunteer Profile

Marie Kahn is one of DoR's almost 60 voter registration volunteers. She exemplifies the can-do attitude of this growing group, which is gearing up for this year’s critical elections. She came to Rossmoor three years ago, bringing her years of voter registration experience with her. “We turned Moraga blue,” she said, crediting the uptick in Democratic votes to a multi-pronged effort that involved 167 volunteers. “We really targeted areas where potential voters were not registered,” she explained, “like assisted living facilities, apartments, and other areas where people are most likely to have moved.”

Kahn said she’s always been interested in public affairs, though her voter registration activism really began during the George Bush presidency. “I really wanted to do something about it,” she said. “People died here for the right to vote.”
Cheryl Cook-Kallio / Pre-Endorsement Conference

Educator and former Pleasanton Vice Mayor Cheryl Cook-Kallio is challenging lone Bay Area Republican state legislator Catharine Baker for California’s 16th Assembly District, which encompasses the Lamorinda and Tri-Valley areas. Baker assumed the seat after one of the state’s most expensive legislative special election battles and was sworn in to office December 1 of last year.

Cook-Kallio is a veteran teacher of Advanced Placement U.S. Government and United State History, and was voted Teacher of the Year in 1997 and 2005. She is a lifetime resident of the Bay Area. She has served multiple terms as Vice Mayor of Pleasanton. Cook-Kallio was Fremont’s Irvington High School’s coach for the school’s “We the People” team, a competitive civics class. Her team was a California state finalist each year of participation and state champions in 2005.

DoR threw its 17 delegate votes to Cook-Kallio at the Democrats’ 2016 Pre-Endorsement Conference in Fairfield on January 30. (See photos below.) Rossmoor’s delegate count was one of the highest in our region. The Pre-Endorsement Conference is one of the first steps in determining Democratic candidates for the November General Election.

When our government is spoken of as some menacing, threatening, foreign entity, it ignores the fact that in our democracy, government is us. — Barack Obama
Many of us, no matter our political party affiliation, are unhappy with present-day campaign financing. Many of us are similarly dismayed at the prodigious amounts of "dark money" contributions from deep-pocketed special-interest individuals or groups that conceal their identities in order to escape scrutiny; this money is used to support candidates, promote or fight legislative issues, and/or influence elections in order to achieve hidden agendas. Because of this general distrust of the way political campaigns are run and the mysterious funding that comes from donors both local and out of state, the Democrats of Rossmoor are helping to gather signatures required to put the Voters’ Right to Know Act on the November ballot. This is an initiative of interest to all of us.

The **Voters’ Right to Know Act** (#15-00068A2) is a state constitutional amendment proposed for the California ballot in November. If passed, this amendment would reform campaign finance disclosure regulations and add the right to campaign finance disclosure to the state constitution. The amendment is meant to reform campaign finance disclosure regulations to help the public track special interest donations and expenditures. Some of the comprehensive measure’s components include:

- Requiring political ads to display their top three donors over $50,000.
- Requiring that $10,000 donors be disclosed when at least $50,000 is transferred between individuals or groups for political purposes.
- Doubling penalties for violations of the Political Reform Act.
- Extending the time a political office holder must wait to become a lobbyist from one year to two years.
- Prohibiting gifts from lobbyists and businesses or organizations that employ those lobbyists.

Katha Hartley is the project lead for signature gathering within the Rossmoor community. Any and all interested voters, regardless of party affiliation, who are willing to spend one to three hours collecting signatures in various Rossmoor locations are invited to join this effort. The assignments will be made collaboratively for the convenience of volunteers. Please email Katha at kathah7@msn.com, or call her at (805) 907-5096.
Visited [www.democratsOFrossmoor.org](http://www.democratsOFrossmoor.org) lately? If not, join the 2,702 different people who have made 3,554 visits to 7,162 webpages in the last 11 months.

In January 2016, 400 people visited the Newsletter webpage and 230 the Home webpage.

If you have friends who have expressed interest in our club, please refer them to our website!

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.” — *Nelson Mandela*

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**Upcoming Events**

**March 2 New Members’ Party.**  
Hillside Vista Room, 4:30 p.m.

**March 7 Book Club:** *Why the Right Went Wrong: Conservatism From Goldwater to the Tea Party and Beyond* by E.J. Dionne.  
Gateway Multipurpose Room 2, 3 p.m.

**March 14 Film:** *American Experience—JFK, Part 1.* Peacock Hall, 1 and 7 p.m.

**March 24 General Meeting:** Brendon Hurd, President, Walnut Creek Teachers Assoc. Event Center, 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. speaker

**April 1 Book Club:** *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* by Jane Mayer.  
Gateway Multipurpose Room 2, 3 p.m.

**April 8 Film:** *American Experience—JFK, Part 2.* Peacock Hall, 1 and 7 p.m.

**April 28 General Meeting:**  
Kate Hartley, Donna Columbo, and Tim O'Keefe—*Affordable Housing & Housing for the Homeless.*  
Event Center, 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. speaker