

Dear Sunnyvale Democrats and friends,

This is a reminder to come to our next meeting on Saturday, October 17th.

Sally Lieber will speak on How to Make a State Law. What does it take to get a bill passed through the California State Legislature and signed into law? We're pleased to welcome back former state Assemblymember Sally Lieber who will share with us a wealth of first-hand experience on this topic.

Ms. Lieber became Speaker pro Tempore of the Assembly before being term-limited out of office last year. Renowned for her work ethic and strong progressive values, Ms. Lieber has had numerous bills signed by both Democratic and Republican governors. In this talk she'll share what makes a successful bill proposal, how to get your bill idea noticed and practical tips for navigating your legislation through the political process.

October is a "Bring a Friend" month. We are not distributing flyers at this time, so we'd like to keep attendance up and get the word out. Please invite your friends to join us at Las Palmas Park.

October 17, 2009, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sally Lieber, How to Get Your Ideas Turned into State Law

Las Palmas Park Community Building, 850 Russet Dr, Sunnyvale, CA

Please mark your calendars for December 19th. We'll be meeting for a Christmas party from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center at Willow Ranch 1111 Morse Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94089

At our September meeting, the three Democratic candidates for Sunnyvale City Council, all of whom have since been endorsed by the Mercury News, addressed our club: Hon. Tony Spitaleri, Hon. Chris Moylan, and Jim Griffith. They answered the following questions from audience:

- What is Sunnyvale doing to keep our San Francisco Bay healthy?
- What are the City's plans to update communication efforts to engage the many young professionals in the area?
- Many people in Sunnyvale support public financing of Sunnyvale elections. Do you support letting candidates that don't want to have to get special interest groups to give them money to have the option of running with public financing?
- The City's stated goal is to be a regional leader in sustainability. What does sustainability mean to you?

(We ran out of time to ask all the questions, but some candidates supplied several answers the questions that we did not have time to ask at the meeting. See the end of this message for the questions and for information about whom to contact to help walk precincts in support of the candidates.)

Following the questions of the candidates, Mayor Spitaleri provided an update about the downtown redevelopment. He explained that the tight credit market has really hurt the developers.

Finally, Fred Hirsch, made a presentation about single-payer health care. He encouraged members of DCS to write the County of Santa Clara Supervisors to let them know of their support for single-payer healthcare. [On September 29th, the County Board of Supervisors passed the resolution supporting HR676. Supervisors Cortese, Shirakawa and Yeager voted yes, Supervisors Kniss and Gage abstained.]

Onward!
Nancy Smith
DCS President
408-992-0652

To volunteer for the candidates, please contact the following people:
For Tony Spitaleri, contact Melodi Masaniai at 408-596-0183
For Chris Moylan, contact Sheri Codiana at sheri@netsamurai.com
For Jim Griffith, contact Barbara Fukumoto at Barbf53@aol.com

1) What are your pharmacies in the city doing to encourage and assist recycling of pharmaceuticals?

Jim: The answer is likely "nothing", and there isn't much that the city can do, since pharmacies are largely regulated by state or federal law. For Sunnyvale, the primary focus for this problem to date has been in trying to educate people through press releases and flyers after having purchased their pharmaceuticals. The City should work with pharmacies and encourage them to voluntarily hand out pharmaceutical disposal instructions with every prescription. There may be some legal hurdles to doing this, but it's worth a try.

2) What steps are you taking or have you taken to "bridge" the gap between residents and the business community?

Chris: I joined the Chamber of Commerce, and attend their monthly breakfast meeting every month so I can learn what their concerns are. As result I have been endorsed by their political action committee, SUNPAC, in both of my campaigns.

Jim: I think this has to largely be driven by the business community itself. That means making groups like the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association more effective in promoting Sunnyvale businesses. Unfortunately those groups are fractured and ineffective, currently. Getting the two groups to overcome

past difficulties and work together (and possibly even merge their efforts) is the first step in becoming more effective in telling residents about Sunnyvale businesses.

Making Sunnyvale more bikable and walkable is a huge part of this as well. Once a resident turns the ignition to go shopping, there is little difference to that resident between shopping in Sunnyvale and shopping in Mountain View or Santa Clara. And we've lost some business as a result. If residents are comfortable walking or biking to their shopping destinations, then Sunnyvale preserves much more of its local customers.

3) Did the accident on the Mathilda Bridge change how you think about the Mary Avenue Bridge?

Chris: No. That bridge is needed to help disperse the traffic from Moffett Towers and help out our neighbors who are stuck in traffic on Mathilda avenue twice a day.

Jim: The primary way it affected my view was to point out how tenuous the connections across 101 really are. We've only got three, and when the one went out, it caused major disruptions in traffic patterns. So the Mary Overpass will serve to mitigate that, to an extent. However, it also creates new hazards and maintenance costs that we will have to be able to cover, if the bridge is finished. It's a net wash, but it really did demonstrate how inadequate the northern traffic flow capacity really is.

4) What can the Council do to engage more residents in the political process?

Chris: I think that my public financing program would help, although I haven't gotten the votes to pass it yet.

Jim: Communication is the key, and the City does a poor job of engaging its residents. It starts with a complete revamping of the City's web site. Right now, the City provides all campaign-related financial filings online, so you can see who donated what to which campaign. Every September 24th filing is present on the web, right now. But I challenge any resident to actually locate that information. Information is useless if people cannot find it.

Part of this is just a greater presence in the community. Council should do more to attend neighborhood association meetings. Council should require one of its members to be present at every quarterly neighborhood association meeting that the City runs. Council should require at least one member to attend at least one meeting of every board or commission per year.

And I think Councilmembers need to be more willing to engage in electronic media. Right now, most of them shun online forums, and they make minimal

use of email. Better use of both makes Councilmembers more approachable. To the limits that the Brown Act allows, I intend to make use of these media.

5) What can the City do to lead a community effort to reduce water use?

Jim: For starters, we need to extend the scope of the "purple pipe" system in the northern part of the City, which circulates recycled water for landscaping purposes. Every gallon of recycled water we can use there is a gallon of potable water we save.

Second, Council needs to make a concerted effort to emphasize drought-tolerant plants and trees in the plans for all new developments, so that those developments are as water-friendly as possible in the future. Landscaping is a huge drain on water resources.

Council should investigate encouraging use of "grey water" systems. I'm a little hesitant on this, because there is a real danger of health hazards when hundreds of residents install their own grey water systems in their own way. And to that end, I prefer it if reclamation is done at one central place (the water treatment plant) than in individual homes.

6) I noticed the signs saying "bicycle friendly community--2006". Any plans of extending this into the future?

Jim: Yup. Two of my priorities will be to make Mary a bicycle route down its entire length, and to somehow hook up the Stevens Creek Trail to the South Mary pedestrian bridge. The City is investigating some other neat ideas, such as repaving bicycle lanes in a non-traditional asphalt color, to make them stand out and increase safety. Other cities have green or purple bicycle lanes, and I think having green bike lanes in Sunnyvale would be great (but not so much purple).

I also want to see the Stevens Creek Trail completed, if the right plan can be found.

7) [The following was on one card:]

Water crisis? Elaborate please.

Budget 13 million deficit How do we handle that?

Problems in Sunnyvale education--what are they?

Jim: Water: The expanding population of California and the expanding needs for water for agriculture and power production are taxing the state's ability to provide water. This is creating both statewide and regional water challenges,

particularly with the southern half of the state importing virtually all of its water from the north, and California as a state is increasingly importing its water from other states. We will begin to directly see the effect of this shortly, as the San Francisco water district has already warned all local jurisdictions (including Sunnyvale) to expect a 50% increase in water rates in the next two years.

At get-togethers like League of Cities or the National Conference of Mayors, the growing challenge of providing water is always the hot topic, and it's only going to be more so, going forward.

Budget: We've already got a plan for that, that involves reduced spending, getting a greater lifespan out of our capital expenditures, voluntary concessions from the bargaining units, and drawing down on the reserves over the next seven years. In the short term, we're covered.

In the long term, we need to take two approaches. First, we need to find ways to leverage technology, so that city services scale well and don't simply require hiring more people. I was involved in one such effort, with the library's new RFID-based automated materials handling system. Library staff must check in (and check out!) one item every six seconds for every hour that the library is open. And library circulation has increased every year at least going back ten years (which is only as far back as I went). We cannot continue to hire more check-in/check-out people whenever volume goes up. The automated sorting system scales for greater volume and requires a fixed number of staffers to keep it running. So by buying this, we've effectively capped our labor costs for check-in/check-out, going forward into future years. We need to find other such opportunities elsewhere, so that scaling services doesn't always mean "just hire more people".

Second, we need to make our business more diverse and more effective. This down-cycle in the economy hit us hard in large part because our two top revenue generators, Network Appliance and Juniper Networks, are in the exact same industry - business-to-business electronic equipment. A more diverse tax base protects us against such a bad down-turn in the future. The best way to preserve services is to generate sufficient revenue for them.

Education: A number. Funding is always a challenge. When funding goes down, schools always cut library services as a first step. This puts pressure on the public libraries, but Sunnyvale's is the worst in the County at providing library services to its residents (lowest per-capita collection size, lowest per-capita public computers, least per-capita facilities space, no study rooms, no teen room, etc.). So that's an obvious problem that Sunnyvale has failed to address.

The second is that when the City makes decisions about future population growth, they don't make the schools a part of the discussion. So the City can approve new developments that attract more residents, and the first that the schools learn about it is when enrollment shoots up unexpectedly. By making the schools a part of the process, schools can better plan for changes that will come.

Also, the lack of a high school anywhere north of Remington is a significant problem that results in higher truancy rates and an increase in the gang problem. Finding a way to get a northern high school would have a dramatic effect on the quality of life in Sunnyvale.