**Grand Democrats General Meeting**

**November 17, 2021**

**Call to Order** was made by President Bill Shields at 6:32 p.m. He led the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

**President's Comments**: Bill Shields reminded the membership that this is our last meeting of 2021, with the next being in January 2022. There will not be a blue lunch this month due to Thanksgiving. Blue Breakfasts and Lunches will resume in January.

The Wine Tasting event was very successful. Bill thanked board member Mike Kolsky for suggesting the event and making the initial contact. Pattie Doss, social chair, selected the food from AJs. Bill thanked Mark Hamilton for handling tickets and finalizing food negotiations with AJs. Bill thanked Carol Karsten, Nancy Hamilton and Paula Wilson for helping with set-up and greeting attendees. He thanked Serene and Randy Matthews for helping with clean up. Finally, Bill acknowledged member Nancy Schoon for designing the tasting glasses and invitations.

Bill attended the grand opening of the Maricopa County Democrats' nice new facility. It is twice as large as the one that was targeted and burned a couple years ago. Bill reminded the members that it is time to renew for 2022. Participation and payment of dues is important because we will be involved in a number of activities in support of the Democrat candidates that emerge after the primaries.

**Treasurer's Report**: Mark Hamilton reported balances as of 10/31/2021. Balances for checking and savings combined are $9003. There is still a check outstanding to the vintner for about $1300 The net gain to the club after the wine tasting event was nearly $900.

**Committee Reports**

*Adopt-A-Street*: Carol Karsten reported that a clean up event was held last weekend, As a community service, Grand Dems clean up along Mountain View boulevard four times per year. Carol invited those in the meeting to participate. The next clean up event will be Feb 12, 2022 and an email comes out prior to that with the details.

*Membership*: Marty Cohen reported that we currently have 205 members, a very good number. The membership forms will now go directly to treasurer Mark Hamilton to streamline the process.

*Program*: Barbara Nelson reported that beginning in January we will start having candidates as speakers. She hopes to have forums to allow us to hear all of candidates running for one office at the same meeting.

**Old Business**

*Updating Grand Dems By-Laws* We have been looking at the by-laws and position descriptions for the purpose of modifying them. The last time they were reviewed was in 2012. The proposed changes in the by-laws will be sent out in an email link by mid December, 30 days before the January meeting. To portions in black font is original wording. Stricken out red font are the words or portions proposed to be deleted. Red font will indicate the proposed changes. The current by-laws are available on the website. The membership will be asked to approve those changes in the January meeting.

*Petition Drive to Rescind Voter Suppression Legislation* We were involved in the effort to circulate positions relative to seven pieces of legislation by the Arizona legislature. The Arizona constitution provides a way for voters to rescind legislation through the petition process. Unfortunately, only the flat tax proposal met petition requirements and that issue will be reviewed. The dirty money petition still has time remaining to meet the required number of signatures.

*Joint Meeting with LD22* We had over 200 people in attendance, with five quality speakers. The purpose of the event was to share information, learn how we can get involved, and also to show unity as Democrats. We hope to do more joint projects in the future.

**New Business:**

*Our Non-Profits*: Nadaburg Schools & West Valley Food Bank have been supported by the Grand Dems for a number of years.. Barbara gave an overview of these two organizations. Barbara said a donation to Nadaburg qualifies for an Arizona tax credit of $200 per person, or $400 per couple filing jointly. We assisted with helping Nadaburg to pass a bond a couple years ago. They will be attempting another bond soon for their first high school. The state provides money to build the building but the district is responsible for everything else.

Likewise a donation to West Valley Food bank (up to $300 for individuals and $600 per couple) impacts federal tax owed and a state tax credit.

Barbara highlighted two pages with information and forms with specifics on Nadaburg and West Valley Food Bank. Recepticles are available at each meeting for smaller donations to these non-profits.

*Election of Club Officers and Board Members for 2022* Club member Randy Matthews led the election process of 2022 board members.

The Slate of Board Candidates put forth into nomination were:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|   | President:  | Bill Shields  |
|   | Vice President:  | Carol Karsten  |
|   | Secretary:  | Nancy Ann Martin  |
|   | Treasurer:  | Mark Hamilton  |
|   | Member at Large:  | Paula Wilson  |
|   | Member at Large:  | Serene Matthews  |
|   | Member at Large:  | Kevin Boivin  |

There were no additional nominations from the floor. The slate of candidates was elected.

**Program**

*Ricardo Serna*, President of Maricopa County Young Democrats has worked in Pennsylvania and New York City in support of Democratic candidates. Growing up in the south side of Chicago he experienced poverty and gang violence. He moved to Arizona in 2016 and helped with the Fontes and Penzone campaigns. He wants to help directionless youth find a purpose.

Maricopa County Young Democrats started in 2011. Ricardo would like to see their activities be more substantive than in the past, be more involved in the community and be youth led. Voting members of MCYD must be under 40 years of age.

The state party usually concentrates on people above 40. He says we need investment in younger voters.

Ricardo showed a presentation on the data of younger voters, MCYD goals for the 2022 and 2024 election and goals of building future Democratic leaders from their ranks. He invited Grand Dems members to join the Maricopa County Young Democrats in support of their activities. He also requested donations for their work. Their website is MCYDems.org There is a donor button on their website.

*Kaylan Fodor* is the regional political organizer for Health Care Rising Arizona. They are trying to protect the assets of people who have had to borrow money for medical expenses. They are a grassroots health care organization who are working hard to pursue changes in health care. They have 600 members statewide. Arizonans can find themselves with a lot of medical debut because care or services aren't covered by insurance, providers are not in-network, and expensive medications. Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in Arizona and country wide.

Collection agencies are very aggressive in trying to collect medical debt. Laws on the books were written a long time ago and the "numbers" are inadequate. Through study they defined new "numbers" with cost of living increases so that the modifications will be be automatic in the future. They are also trying to reduce the percentage of potential payroll garnishment down to 10%.

In their proposed legislation they have defined medical debt, have added allowances for ground and air ambulance, and capped the interest charged at 3%.

They have a partnership with RIPMedical Debt who will forgive $100 of medical debt for an Arizona resident for each petition signature acquired. Health Care Rising Arizona is on track to have enough signatures although they do not have them yet. Healthcarerisingarizona.org is their website.

This legislation was attempted through the legislature but the matter did not even get a hearing in committee. They do have support of eighteen legislators as well as other organizations across the state.

Bill will ask our webmaster to include information about Health Care Rising Arizona on our website and committed to include Maricopa County Young Democrats in future joint meetings.

**50-50 Raffle** was won by Nancy Hamilton.

**Next Meeting**: January 26, 2022

**Adjourn**: Bill Shields declared the meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Submitted by,

Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary

**Grand Democrats Joint Meeting**

**October 27, 2021**

In lieu of a regular general meeting, the Grand Democrats hosted a joint meeting with representatives of all Democratic organizations in the West Valley.  Over 200 people attended.

The main purpose of the meeting was to demonstrate a Democratic united front for the upcoming campaign season.

The presenters were:

* **Deborah Howard**: Arizona Indivisible Redistricting Team Leader
* **Nancy Schriber**:  Chair of the Maricopa County Democratic Party
* **Bill Shields**:  Grand Dems President
* **Ne'Lexia Galloway**:  Executive Director of Maricopa County Democratic Party
* **Kristin Roberts**:  Save our Schools, West Valley

In addition to the presentations, there was a Q&A with the audience.

Submitted by,

Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary

**Grand Democrats "Welcome Back" General Meeting**

**September 22, 2021, 6:30 p.m.**

The **Call to Order** was made by President Bill Shields at 6:30 p.m. and member Roger Rhodes led the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Bill welcomed two special guests, Rachel Howard, a doctoral student writing her dissertation on retirement and our speaker, former Maricopa County Recorder and current Secretary of State candidate, Adrian Fontes.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the June 23, 2021 general meeting were approved.

**President Comments: Bill** welcomed everyone back! Our last in-person meeting was March 25, 2020. Since then the pandemic has killed over 659,000 Americans and anti-maskers and anti-vaxers continue to resist common sense and science. Insurrectionists stormed the capital threatening the peaceful transition of power and the former president was impeached. Eighteen states, including Arizona, have enacted voter suppression laws..

But there have been bright spots as well including Biden being elected by a margin of 9,000,000 votes and Harris becoming the first female vice president. Two Democrats won special elections in Georgia and Democrats hold the White House, House of Representatives and Senate. Two COVID relief bills were passed and the war in Afghanistan is finally over.

Events can give us pause and hope. We have hard work ahead of us. We need to participate in a variety of ways. We need to be informed, involved, and fight for democratic principles everywhere.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Mark Hamilton reported that, as of August 31, 2021 Grand Dems' accounts (combined checking and savings) total $5301.00.

**Committee Reports:**

**Membership:** Mark, reporting for Membership chairperson Marty Cohen, said we have two new memberships, nine renewals, and a total membership of 204.

**Old Business:**

**Wine Tasting Update:** The Grand Dems' fundraiser to support Democratic candidates in 2022 will be held November 9, 2021 at the Shields' home. Tickets are $75 per person for wine tasting, fine food, and a bottle, or bottles, of wine to take home. The vintner is Alcantera from Verde Valley. Invitations will be sent out early next month and will be limited to the first 50 respondents.

**Club Advertising:** The board decided we need to increase awareness of club events for members and non-members. We intend to advertise more broadly in the Lifestyles magazine using paid and free ads.

**Blue Breakfasts and Lunches:** Both blue breakfasts and lunches are being held at Chef Peter's Bistro in Sun Village. Attendance has been sporadic in the summer months.

**Updating Officer and Board Member Position Descriptions:** Club documents for officers, board members and committee chairs have not been updated for nearly ten years. The current board prioritized updating these documents and each board member and committee chair was asked to review and update their current position descriptions. An ad hoc committee will review, standardize and present a final versions for board approval. The final recommendations will come to the membership for potential approval at the November general meeting.

**Senator Sinema Letter:**In March, the Grand Dems Board passed a resolution in support of the $15 minimum wage and opposition to the Senate filibuster. We were in disagreement with Senator Sinema's positions on both of these issues. Bill wrote a letter to Senator Sinema on the board's behalf. After three months, Bill received a form letter from her office which did not address our concerns.

**New Business:**

**Petition Drive to Rescind Voter Suppression Legislation:** Becky Sayler and Landon Andreas were in attendance to gather signatures on petitions to rescind recent laws intended to suppress votes, take money from education, and allow dirty money. These petitions are allowed under the Arizona constitution.

Veto referendums for voter suppression and education money need 118, 823 valid signatures soon. They are hoping to gather 150,000 as a cushion for each of these petition efforts. The Dirty Money referendum needs 237, 645 valid petition signatures by July, 2022. If enough signatures are obtained, these issues will come directly to the voters in 2022. Bill commended Frank and Barbara for their many efforts on obtaining signatures including multiple open houses at their homes.

**Special Joint Meeting October 27:** Mark reported on Democrats' desire to show unity in the valley. Bill, Barbara and Mark have been meeting with Cheri Tomlinson from LD22 to discuss how to unite for 2022 election efforts. A joint meeting will be held on October 27th - in place of our general meeting. A robust list of seventeen local, county and statewide groups will be participating. The purpose of the event is to share ways to be involved in the 2022 election.

**Speaker: Adrian Fontes**

Barbara introduced our speaker, Adrian Fontes. Adrian is a former Marine and exemplifies dedication, discipline and sacrifice. He was instrumental in improving voting in Maricopa County and is now running for Secretary of State. He pledges to stand up to voter suppression laws.

Adrian told us he grew up in Nogales and has lived, worked, and served all across the state of Arizona.

As Maricopa County Recorder his administration was instrumental in setting up Vote Centers, weekend and night voting, ballot tracking systems, and county procurement of voting systems.

He says his current candidacy for Secretary of State is serious businesses and will be a big, big race. His campaign will need help and millions of dollars.

Adrian says Democrats need qualified candidates who can win state wide. He believes Democratic values are American values and we shouldn't be shy about talking about them. He believes that integrity, honor and fairness are important.

**The 50:50 Prize and raffle door prize winners were called.**

**The October meeting will be the combined event discussed earlier and the November general meeting will be held on November 17th due to Thanksgiving.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54.

Submitted by,

Serene Matthews,

Grand Dems Secretary

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**
**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ZOOM MEETING**
**June 23, 2021**
**6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by President Bill Shields at 6:07 p.m.

MINUTES OF MAY GENERAL MEETING were approved as submitted.

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS: Bill said this is our last general meeting until September when we hope to meet in person at Cimarron.  Social time will be at 6:00 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 6:30. The board is looking to do a Welcome Back theme.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Mark reported financials as of 5/31/2021. There were deposits of $340 from new memberships renewals. There was $1,335 in fundraising monies deposited. Expenses were $14.99 for the Zoom payment. The combined balance for checking and savings accounts was $5,051.53.

Bill stated that we will be keeping the Zoom account for board meetings as some members are not in Grand year round.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Membership**: Marty reported we had four new members in the last 30 days. Paid 2021 members total 184. Seventy people paid last year but have not renewed this year, despite reminders. Marty is suggesting that board members split up the list and call those previous members. Marty will send that list to Bill and board members will call.

**Social**: Pattie reminded attendees of tomorrow night's Blue Dinner at Chef Peter's Bistro.

**Program & PR**: Barbara reported that Adrian Fontes will be our speaker in September. He will be a candidate for Secretary of State.

**Adopt-a-Street**: Carol says some of her regular Adopt-a-Street people will not be available so she encourages all to meet at 7:00 a.m. on August 14th. There will be treats!

**Website**: Warren did not have anything to report.

OLD BUSINESS

**Blue Breakfasts and Dinners**: We will continue both blue breakfasts and dinners throughout the summer. Dinner will be at 3:00 due to Chef Peter's summer hours.

**Club Advertising**: We get 1/2 page per year, or two quarter pages per year in the Lifestyles magazine. There would be a charge of $403 for an additional three quarter page adds. Thus, we would get five quarter pages (3 paid, 2 complimentary) for $403. He suggests we highlight the Grand Dems Mission Statement, summary of AZ Democratic happenings, and meeting guests and subject matter. We can also submit for community wide e-blasts if done so by the 10th of the month prior. Following some discussion, the board will follow up at their next meeting.

The Newcomer Meetings for SCG have been assigned to a specific group within the HOA. Marty hasn't received information on how to proceed. Aly Cline will help facilitate our involvement in the newcomer meeting as she hopes to be more involved with it as well.

Members expressed frustration that the newcomer's meeting used to be much more robust and accessible to interest groups.

**Wine Tasting**: We had to make a change in the planned wine vendor but Mike has connected with another Arizona winemaker so plans will proceed. The event will be November 9 at the Shields' home. Cost will be $75 per person and we are hoping for fifty people. Each person will receive a $25 bottle of wine and high quality hors d'oeuvres The club will receive 10 percent on additional wine purchases.

NEW BUSINESS:

**Future Meetings**: The September meeting will be in person at Cimarron with a Welcome Back theme. The rooms for other 2021 meetings have been reserved. The 2022 meeting rooms have been requested.

**Senator Sinema**: What to do? A survey was sent to members and 78 people responded. Results included: write letters 61, rally at her office 41, join a car rally 17. Sixty six people felt we ought to join other Democratic groups in whatever action we take. Cheri Tomlinson, chair of LD22, said they have nothing planned although some members have written letters. The county Democratic club has passed a resolution to urge her to change her position on the filibuster.

Mark reported that the group Indivisible is going to have activities regarding senator positions. Bill and Mark will contact Indivisible and send out information to the general membership about potential activity.

**SPEAKER**: Sharon Levinson introduced our speaker Aly Cline, District 2 representative to the Surprise City Council.

Aly has webinar meetings scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00-11:00 a.m. She meets with people in person on the last Monday of each month at Grand Cafe, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Her newsletter comes out once a month and is available at SurpriseAZ.gov.

She indicated that Epcor has discounts available for those who qualify. The Surprise Fourth of July will happen with food trucks, music and fireworks. On June 26, Surprise will sponsor Coffee with a Vet from 9:00-11:00 a.m. with a speaker, socialization, free coffee and bagels. Navigators will be available those who need help with VA benefits.

Surprise currently has 28 restaurants that are not "chain" restaurants. Aly will be highlighting them in a future newsletter. There will be a new restaurant opening in the old Amuse-bouche site.

Aly stressed that she is available to residents regarding concerns or questions or activities.

She responded to a number of participant questions.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m. The highest number of participants observed was 27.

Submitted by

Serene Matthews
Dems Secretary

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**

General Membership Zoom Meeting Minutes

May 26th, 2021

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** led by President Bill Shields.

2. **Minutes of April 28, 2021 General Meeting:** Serene thanked Nancy Martin for writing the minutes from last month. They were accepted.

3. **President's Comments:**
Bill stated that we have more than 40 people registered for tonight’s meeting; the most for any of our Zoom membership meetings. Likely Katie Hobbs’ appearance is a factor.

Beginning in September, we will return to regular in person meetings in the Aqua Fria room in the Cimarron Center.

It is not going to be easy for Democrats to keep Mitch and the Republicans in the minority. Five members of the US Senate, all Republicans, will be retiring next year:

Richard Burr, North Carolina;
Pat Toomey, Pennsylvania;
Rob Portman, Ohio;
Richard Shelby Alabama;
Roy Blunt, Missouri.

Ten senate seats that are considered possible flip seats. Five are currently held by Republicans:

Burr of N.C.,
Portman, of OH,
Toomey of PA,
Ron Johnson of WI.
and Marco Rubio of FL.

Five are held by Democrats:

Raphael Warnock, Georgia; (Special elec on winner)
Catherine Cortez Masto, Nevada;Maggie Hassan, New Hampshire;
Michael Bennet of Colorado;
Mark Kelly of Arizona.

What’s at stake is control of the Senate. As a club, we are limited in the amount we can contribute to a national campaign, likely focusing on Mark Kelly. Therefore, Bill suggests that, as individuals, we contribute to the Democratic candidates that will be running in the general election for each of these races. We certainly have to vigorously support Mark Kelly.

4.**Treasurer's Report:** Mark reported figures as of 4/30/2021. There was $160.02 of income, Expenses were $181.99. Balances of checking and savings combined are $3391.50.

5. **Committee Reports:**

*Membership:* Marty reported we have one new member to total 178. Pre-covid membership was 217. Membership renewals are coming in slowly. The renewal letter was emailed to 71 members and seven have renewed.

*Programs and Public Relations:* Sharon reported the June 23 general meeting speaker will be Aly Kline, Surprise city councilwoman. She will give a city update, especially pertaining to water issues and new restaurants.

*Social:* Pattie reported that a Blue Dinner will be held tomorrow at Chef Peter's at 4:00 p.m. In June, Blue Dinners will begin at 3:00 pm due to early closure during summer months. Blue Breakfasts will be the first Tuesday of the month at 8:00 a.m., also at Chef Peter's. We have requested outside seating, weather permitting. The staff is very happy to have us meeting there. With CDC guidance changing, people do not need to bring vaccination records.

*Website:* Bill has implemented a new President's Corner article on the website. Bill will add more as he is motivated to do so.

**Old Business**

*Campaign Activity 2020:* Grand Dems Board approved a plan of election activities similar to what was done in 2020, including a Candidate Rally, Golden Ticket Information and Lit Drops. Candidates will be invited to speak at general meetings and be present at those where they are not highlighted speakers. Leaders for various activities have been identified and will be asking for help from the membership.

*Wine Tasting Event:* Mike Kolsky is leading a wine tasting fundraising event. After a favorable initial response by members, the board approved the event for November 9th at the Shields' home. The cost will be $75 per attendee and each will get a bottle of wine and nice hors'derves. We are assuming 40 - 50 people attending.

*CAM Reservations for Meetings and Events:* We have confirmed space for October and November general meetings and have requested dates for 2022.

*Documents and By-Laws Review:* Mark reported we are working through two documents. The rst is the club by-laws and the second details board member and committee chair job descriptions. They have not been updated since 2012. Each officer and committee chair will be updating the job descriptions considering what the job now entails.

Some committee and positions have not been active and the proposal may be to eliminate them.

These proposed changes will be brought to the general membership in October or November.

*Program:*

Katie Hobbs, current Arizona Secretary of State was a social worker, legislator, and senate minority leader in Arizona. She has always worked to provide opportunities for Arizonans. As Secretary of State she led the fight to keep our election secure.

Katie stated that the 2020 Election was successful in security and participation and that we can be proud of it. She also stated that the 2020 Election was over when results were certified.

Secretaries of State must be focused on the process, not on the outcome. Many leaders know the 2020 election was fair but are afraid to say so due to political ramifications.

There already were post-election audits which were completed successfully. The one currently in process is designed to promote 'the big lie' and undermine democracy. That is dangerous.

The Arizona Legislature is attempting to remove constitutional authority from the Secretary of State's office and give it to the attorney general. This provision is obviously partisan as it is designed to end with the Hobbs term. The current Arizona Attorney General is obligated to defend her office and it is not going well.

Katie took a series of questions from Grand Dems members. She will be announcing her plans for 2022 next week.

**New Business:**

Member Steve Katz expressed concern about Krysten Sinema's positions and encouraged the Grand Dems to do something. Bill reported that the Grand Dems board had written a letter to Senator Sinema about her positions on the minimum wage and the filibuster but that we would take up the issue again at the next board meeting.

There were thirty two participants during the Zoom meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,

Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**

General Membership Zoom Meeting Minutes

April 28th, 2021

1. **Call to Order:** Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Bill Shields.

2. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** Minutes from March 24th Meeting - minutes were approved as written and posted on the website.

3. **President’s Comments
    2020 Census and Redistricting:**

* U.S. population increased by 7% - smallest ever
* Population shifts will have political ramification that determines representation in Congress.
* Of those losing representation in Congress, all but one are blue states, N.Y., IL, MI, OH, PA, W.V., and CA.
* Six states will gain representation in Congress; OR, MT, CO, TX, NC, and FL. (All red states)
* While the changes are small, with the exception of TX which will gain 2 seats, the other states will gain 1 seat in Congress.
* These changes in a state’s representation has ramifications with the distribution in Congress and of the Electoral votes in 2024.
* In addition, how each state gerrymanders the congressional districts will reflect the interests of the majority party in a given state.
* In AZ, a state that has had a significant population increase in the last 10 years, did not pick up or lose seat in Congress. In 2010, AZ’s population was 6,677,000. In 2020, the population is 7,300,000.

1. **Treasurer’s Report:** – Treasurer Mark Hamilton reported that as of April 28, 2021, there was 1 membership renewal totaling $20.00, a donation of $10.00 and interest of $0.03. The combined balances (checking and savings) were $3413.47.

2. **Committee Reports:**

    **Membership:** Marty Cohen reported 167 members paid in 2021. He has received 4 additional checks since our last Board meeting.

    **Program and Public Relations:** Barbara Nelson reports that Katie Hobbs, AZ’s Secretary of State will speak at the next Grand Dem’s General Meeting on May 26, 2021. Prior to becoming our Secretary of State, she served in the Arizona House of Representatives and was a minority leader in the Arizona Senate. Secretary Hobbs defended Arizona voters and combatted dissatisfaction of the outcome in our recent 2020 elections. She will speak about our safe, secure 2020 election. She may give us some insight into her future political plans.

    **Social:** Pattie Doss reported that Blue Breakfasts will resume on Tues. May 4th at 8AM. We will meet at **Chef Peters Bistro** , 17300 N. Sun Village Pkwy., in Sun Village in Surprise. In order to attend the breakfast, each Grand Dem’s member is required to bring their Covid 19 vaccination card indicating that they were vaccinated on or before April 20th. Once you show your vaccination card, you will receive a syringe sticker.

Dinners will resume on Thursday May 27th at 4 PM at **State 48 Brewery**, 13823 W. Bell Rd in Surprise just east of Litchfield.

**Ad Hoc 2022 Election Committee:** Nancy Martin and Serene Matthews will meet with Mark Hamilton during the week of May 2nd to review the Grand Dem’s by-laws and position documents. Each Board member will have an opportunity to finalize the updates of the by-laws and Board positions. Once the By-laws are updated, Grand Dems members will receive the information on the updates.

3. **Old Business:**

    **Zoom Account:** Bill Shields suggested that the Grand Dems will obtain their own Zoom account. Bill also indicated that even after the Grand Dems resume in-person meetings that there is merit in continuing zoom meetings for those members who are unable to attend meetings in person.

4. **New Business:**

    **Room Reservations:** Contact and complete application to CAM by May 3rd to reserve rooms for Grand Dems Fall meetings and for the candidate rally that will take place on Sept. 24, 2022.

5. **Speaker:** Barbara Nelson introduced Bobbi Kithcart. Bobbi works with the homeless in Phoenix through the Maricopa Dept. of Health. She is also a liaison for ICE whereby she helps asylum seekers transition to their new environment. She explained that 40,000 people experience homelessness throughout the state of Arizona and there are 10,000 homeless in Maricopa County. Bobbi communicates with homeless clients so that they can be placed in facilities that best fits there needs. Placement has been especially important during the pandemic as social distancing helps to stop the spread of the virus. Bobbi meets with homeless clients in order to evaluate their medical and mental health status so they can receive the appropriate care and placement. Bill Shields will receive and share an email with Grand Dem members letting them know where they can send donations and find ways to volunteer.

• Our next General Meeting will be held by Zoom on May 26, 2021.

• There was a high of 18 participants in today’s zoom meeting held on April 28, 2021.

• The meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM..

Submitted by Nancy A. Martin

Board Member At Large

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**

General Membership Zoom Meeting Minutes

March 24th, 2021

* 1. **Call to Order** and Pledge of Allegiance were led by President Bill Shields. There were 25 Zoom participants at the call to order.
	2. **Minutes of February 24th Meeting** - Minutes were approved as written and posted on the website.
	3. **President's Comments:** These items were discussed by the Grand Dems Board at its meeting earlier this month.
	**Zoom Account:** We want to get the club its own Zoom account so we won’t continue to impose on Teresa Neiberg. Even though the need for Zoom meetings will end, we have discussed continuing to use Zoom for board meetings as some board members live in or travel to other areas of the country during the year.
	**Old Documents and Paperwork:** Board members have years of old documents including treasurer’s reports, reports to the state of Arizona, minutes of past meetings and correspondence. It was decided that material be kept for four years, with the exception of all meeting minutes which will be kept indefinitely as a permanent record of club decisions. Paula Wilson, Mark Hamilton, Serene Matthews and Marty Cohen will cull documents prior to 2017, except meeting minutes, and report completion at the May board meeting.
	**Updating By-laws:** Our by-laws have not been reviewed or updated for at least six years; they should be reviewed for currency and relevance. In addition, committee purposes should be reviewed and changes made where needed.
	Nancy Martin, Serene Matthews and Mark Hamilton will review the by-laws and other relevant matters, such as committee responsibilities and notebooks. They will report to the board in June.
	**Building a Bench:** We need to find ways to attract members to serve as club officers, board members and committee chairs. We have club members who are more than capable to serve in any one of these capacities but have never come forward because they are hesitant or have never been asked to serve. Therefore, we are asking all club members to approach members they think would be capable.
	**Venue for Breakfast and Blue Monday Dinners:** After the lockdown is lifted, Coco’s will not be available for events because of reconstruction and remodeling. The board is looking into other possible venues. If anyone has any ideas, please let a board member know.
	**Senator Sinema:** During the board meeting we had an extensive discussion about Senator Sinema and her positions on the $15.00 minimum wage and the filibuster. Consensus formed that Bill draft a letter to Senator Sinema expressing our concern about her positions on these two issues and asking her to reconsider. The letter was signed by all but one board member. That board member believes the filibuster should not be changed.
	4. **Treasurer’s Report -** Treasurer Mark Hamilton reported that, as of 2/28/21, there were nine membership renewals totaling $180, a donation of $60 and interest of $0.04. There were no expenses. Combined balances (checking and savings) were $3,383.44.
	5. **Committee Reports**: ·
		+ *Membership* - Marty Cohen reports 162 members paid for 2021. There are 87 paid 2020 members that have not rejoined for 2021. An email letter will be sent to those 87 former members asking them to rejoin. Marty has a check for $30 for Mark.
		+ *Programs/Public Relations*: Barbara and Sharon report that Bobbi Kithcart will join the April general meeting to talk about what she is doing to help the approximate 400 homeless people in downtown Phoenix.
		+ *Web Site*- No report
		+ *Social -*No report
		+ *Ad hoc 2022 Election Committee:* The committee, consisting of Mark Hamilton, Barbra Nelson, Mike Kolsky, Frank Reed, and Bill Shields, is charged with developing plans and strategies for club activities for the 2022 campaign season. The committee had its first meeting on March 3rd . They reviewed and evaluated all the activities pursued during the 2020 election, e.g., texting, post-carding, Golden Ticket, the Candidate Rally. After extensive discussion, they decided to continue with all past activities for 2022. The committee will meet again on April 1st to determine timelines for events and leadership. They envision having a chair and committee for each activity.
	6. **Old Business**: Please look at the Grand Dems website for information regarding donations to Nadaburg School District and the Valley View Food Bank. Barb will check to see if the extension given for filing taxes this year will also apply to tax credits.
	7. **New Business**
	*Location for Dems Breakfasts and Blue Monday Gatherings:* Mark will follow up with NW Valley Dems on their use of Tivoli Gardens for similar events. Burt's Bistro is a possibility given they have a separate room of appropriate size. They also have a dona on policy that would align with our goals. *SCG Garage Sale -*Mike Kolsky reported that we are allowed to have a table when the garage sales begin again. The farmer's market is not available for us to use in outreach.
	8. **Speakers**: **Adrian Fontes**- Barbara commended Adrian on his stellar work upda ng Maricopa County readiness for voting in the 2020 election. Adrian noted that Maricopa county is the second largest voting group in the country and had an increase of 600,000 ballots cast in 2020. He believes there was no blue wave - just disdain for Donald Trump and Martha McSally. He saw groups taking credit for Biden and Kelly's victories in Arizona but Adrian Fontes believes Dems underperformed. In off cycles Dems tend to vote less and we need to be prepared for that.
	Adrian believes the 2020 election revealed the weakness and fragility of our democracy. Our country has a problem with people not believing in the truth and that demonstrates a lack of faith in America. We need to be willing to speak truth. He urges everyone to get involved to help save our Democracy.
	Why did we not get the turn out we needed? Organizers didn't get the job done in getting out the vote, hiding behind the masks and pandemic. Republicans got out there anyway and registered a lot more new voters.
	Adrian Fontes is working as a deputy recorder in Pima county to help make voting better there. He is planning to run for office in 2022 although he is not yet ready to announce.
	**Dr. Frank Reed** - Frank is a past chairperson of LD22 and past president of Grand Dems. He has been working in politics since 1982 and has held office. He fervently wants to help democrats get out and win by analyzing and using data. Frank presented power point information revealing his Analysis of 2020 Election. Frank agrees that Dems don't organize as much as they need to in Arizona. Locally, however, 96.6 percent of SCG dems voters voted. SCG republicans also vote in high numbers.
	In LD 22 90% of Dems voted, 91% of Republicans, and 78% of Independents.
	Frank urges us to meet our new SCG Democrats and help to sign up voters in nearby precincts. As SCG voting percentages are already very high, our efforts may pay off more elsewhere. LD 29 and 30 have a lot of registered democratic voters that didn't show up.

Our next general meeting will be held by Zoom on April 28th.

There were a high of 31 participants in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Submitted by,
Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**

General Membership Zoom Meeting Minutes

February 24th, 2021

1. **Call to Order** at 6:03 PM. Nancy Martin led the Salute to our Flag. The meeting opened with 24 participants.
2. **President’s Comments by Bill Shields**: The Grand Dems Board has begun preparing for the 2022 Election cycle. An ad-hoc Grand Dems Election Committee was formed within the board to brainstorm activities and timelines looking towards Election 2022. The committee will make recommendations to the board which could then be brought to the general membership. The first committee meeting will be Thursday March 4th.

In the first three weeks of the 2021 Arizona legislature, 198 bills have been introduced, some serious and some "wacky." As a club, we will want to keep an eye on these bills.

Vice President Barbara Nelson reported that no state has more voter suppression bills introduced than Arizona, many targeting minority voters. Nationally the 2020 Election has led to surges in both voter suppression and voter expansion/protection activity.
3. **Secretary’s Report** - No modifications were made to the January minutes posted on the website.
4. **Treasurer’s Report given by President Bill Shields**. December 31, 2020 balance was $2083.36 January income (memberships and donations) totaled $1060.04. There were no expenses. The account balances as of January 31, 2021 are $3143.40.
5. **Committee Reports**: ·
	* *Membership* - No report was available due to Marty's illness. He is hopeful to return by the next board meeting.
	* *Adopt-a-Street* - Carol Karsten. About a dozen volunteers came to clean up Mountain View Drive in February. The next clean up activity will be in May.
	* *Programs/Public Relations*: The general meeting in March will feature Grand Dems member Frank Reed and former Maricopa county recorder Adrian Fontes. They will speak on the 2020 election.
6. **Old Business**: The Grand Dems club supports
	* *Nadaburg Tax Credit* - Form is available on the Grand Dems website
	* *Valley View Community Food Bank* - Information is available on the website.
7. **Speaker** – *Request to Speak* - Teresa Neiberg has lived in Grand for eight years and is a member of the Grand Dems. Teresa is a trainer for Request to Speak.

A survey revealed that five meeting participants have an RTS account and four are using it. Anyone with an Arizona address can get an account. Young people may participate before they reach voting age.

Arizona is the only state with a Request to Speak program. This allows citizens to provide input without having to go down to the capital to speak and also to provide input without actually speaking.

The goal with RTS involvement is to stop bad bills from progressing and get good bills moved along.

The group Civic Engagement Beyond Voting holds a Happy Hour on Sundays from 4-6 to give assistance, to hear from legislators, and to hear about upcoming bills. Information on registering for RTS training, and weekly updates is available on their website. Their Iyer Report is available by email every Sunday providing information about bills.

Teresa presented a Request to Speak power point. She then accessed her personal account and expanded on opening and using an account. A help manual exists on the RTS site.

Teresa also gave site tours of the Civic Engagement Beyond Voting and AZ State Legislature websites.

Teresa, and her assistant Dorothy Schumacher, both spoke about bills that had been impacted by publicity and/or comments using the Right to Speak system.

There were 28 participants over Zoom when the presentation finished. Bill thanked Barbara for running the meeting.
8. The next meeting will be March 24th, 2021over Zoom.

The Grand Dems February general meeting ended at 7:18 pm.

Submitted by,
Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary

**GRAND DEMOCRATS**

General Membership Zoom Meeting Minutes

January 27th, 2021

1. **Call to Order and Salute to our Flag** - Vice President Barbara Nelson called the meeting to order. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance together over Zoom.

Barbara commented on our new world under an inclusive Biden administration. She introduced Rachel Howard, PhD candidate from the University of Chicago, who continues to be interested in speaking with seniors as part of her doctoral research. Contact her at rjhoward3@uchicago.edu.
2. **President’s Comments by Bill Shields** - Bill thanked those who have provided well wishes and support during his recent health issues. He thanked Barbara for taking the lead during this time.

Bill spoke on the political situation in Arizona: Arizona Democrats elected Joe Biden and a second Democratic senator in Mark Kelly. Our efforts paid off. Dems voted in record numbers. We fielded candidates for all offices in Maricopa county. Although few won, they did better than expected. Momentum is on our side. We need to do everything we can to support the Biden administration.

The Republican party in Arizona is in disarray. We should take advantage of this by outworking and out organizing them.

We need to work with other Democratic organizations and this year's advances should give us hope. Yes we can.
3. **Secretary’s Report**: Minutes for the November 18, 2020 general meeting have been posted on the Grand Dems website since shortly thereafter.
4. **Treasurer’s Report**: Treasurer Mark Hamilton gave a report as of December 31, 2020 - There was $320.08 in income during November and December. There was $208.40 in expenses for Zoom licenses and Mail Chimp. Total club balance is $2083.36. We are in a cycle of requesting membership renewals so this balance should rise. There are no expenses expected for January.

Mark thanked Paula for her work as Treasurer in prior years.
5. **Committee Reports:**

*Membership*: Barbara reported 148 members are paid for 2021.

*Adopt-a-Street*: Carol said the next clean up will be February 13 at 8:00 am. She invited all to come enjoy the fellowship and clean up the street. Please wear gloves and a face mask.

*Programs/Public Relations*: The speaker for the February 24th meeting will be Teresa Neiberg talking about Request to Speak.

Barbara spoke about the importance of utilizing Request to Speak.
6. **New Business**:

Dems member Jack Hitchcock has passed away. He was very active in his neighborhood and was always willing to volunteer. He had a real interest in Arizona history.

Nadaburg Tax Credit: The Grand Dems organization contributes to the Nadaburg School District. State tax credits are available up to $400 per couple. The form is on our website.

The Grand Dems also support Valley View Community Food Bank. Couples can donate up to $800 to Valley View for state tax credit by writing a check to Valley View Community Food Bank and sending it to: Valley View Community Food Bank, 10771 W Peoria, Sun City, AZ 85351. This information will also be on our website
7. **Speakers** – Program Co-Chair Sharon Levinson introduced Dr. John Carlson and Dr. Tracy Fessenden, Co-Directors, of Arizona State University’s Recovering Truth Project.

A brief summary follows: The Trump organization gave us the term "alternative facts." Journalists did not know how to cover a president who did not respect truth. They discussed the use and comparisons of Time magazine covers and articles asking Is God Dead? in 1966 and Is Truth Dead in 2017.

Carlson and Fessenden saw a crisis of truth in our culture and wondered what resources could be called on.

Trumpism itself became a kind of religion. Religious studies scholars have tools to help understand this phenomenon.

They believe our society used to have shared common news and values. Now we have different cable news channels and social media resulting in a very different environment.

Trust in institutions, including journalism, has broken down and are under assault. Democracy depends on truth and we aren't currently able to agree on basic facts and common values. There is much on the line and we have a lot of work ahead of us. Truth should be non- partisan. They see a path forward focusing on what unites us.

A question and answer period followed the presentation.

Their work can be followed at the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at crca.asu.edu. You can be enrolled for email updates at john.carlson@asu.edu.

8. The next Grand Dems general meeting is **February 24th, 2021**.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by,
Serene Matthews
Grand Dems Secretary