

# O Culver City OBSERVER

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March 22 - 28, 2018

## Retiring Mayor Takes a Look Back

### Stresses "City of Kindness"

By Stephen Hadland  
Observer Publisher

Culver City Mayor Jeff Cooper was beaming as he addressed over 400 residents and business people on Tuesday at the annual Mayor's luncheon.

"Culver City is at the cutting edge of cities around the country, in terms of what we have been able to accomplish, and what we plan to accomplish going forward," he stated during the luncheon where he discussed his tenure on the City Council.

The packed house listened as the introspective mayor listed the accomplishments during his eight years in office and his dedication to "our city

munity," he said. "Its 21 miles of underground fiber is designed for geographic diversity, security and redundancy."

Cooper spoke about the progress the council has

Maintain Financial Stability

Finance was another topic the mayor was happy to talk about.

"Through it all, our City Finances remain much stronger than those of our peer cities," he said. "This year we completed refinancing of all old Redevelopment Agency bonds, providing ongoing savings through 2028 that will benefit both the City and Culver City Unified School District."

The mayor also spoke of challenges the city continues to face, including homelessness, and the availability of affordable housing.

He also talked about the current political climate.

"We are at a moment of di-



Above, Mayor Jeffrey Cooper. Right, long time business man Earl Eskridge receiving the Steven Rose Citizen of the year award.

## Publisher, Councilmember Threatened with Criminal Prosecution

The Culver City Observer and Councilman Jim Clarke have received notice from Culver City Resident Les Greenberg that he had sent a letter to Scott Bixby, Culver City Chief of Police requesting criminal charges be filed against Culver City Observer Publisher Steve Hadland and Culver City councilman Jim Clarke.

Observer Publisher Hadland stated, "I stand firm on the right of the press to provide necessary information to the public. While I believe the

First amendment to the constitution applies here and I quote, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press....' I would risk going to jail before I would fail in my responsibilities to keep the residents of Culver City informed."

The letter arrived at the Observer offices just before press time. We will be reaching out to Councilman Clarke and Chief Bixby for their comments.

## Fox Hills Plaza on Hold Marshall's Store Will Still Close

The following statement was issued on Monday by Councilmembers Goran Eriksson And Jim Clarke regarding Fox Hills Plaza:

"As a result of discussions between Council members

Goran Eriksson and Jim Clarke with real estate developers HSH Management, the developer has decided to suspend activity on the Fox Hills Plaza Project. From these dis-

**Fox Hills continued on page 14**

"Construction of the Culver Connect Fiber network backbone, which began in 2016, is now 90% complete, within the approved budget, and will soon be delivering high speed broadband to businesses and schools throughout the com-

pletion of the City Council's goals, including: Increase Civic Engagement; Enhance the Restoration and Utilization of Ballona Creek; Improve Transportation and Circulation; Promote Workforce Diversity and Development; and Identify New Revenue Sources to

our country, but right here in our Mayberry...the place we call Culver City. I, for one, have been feeling a profound sense of sadness and anger as so many attempt to put a wedge in our community that separates people in a way that

**Mayor continued on page 14**

## Photos Reveal Flyer Distributors



Over the past several weeks a flyer has been distributed a group calling itself AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR CULVER CITY RESIDENTS FIRST. To our knowledge no such committee exist. The Culver City Observer believes groups and individuals supporting or opposing candidates or ballot measures should fully disclose themselves. Many residents have video cameras at their front doors and the Observer requested photos of anyone distributing the flyers in order to identify the people and groups doing the distribution. Photos courtesy Culver City Residents

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Clarke on Civility  
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**ELECTIONS:** Death of  
Nonpartisan Contests  
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**BASEBALL:**  
Culver Girls Score Wins  
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# ELECTION

## Councilman Clarke Decries Lack of Civility

By Jim Clarke  
Culver City Councilman

Last week, we were witness to a vulgar display of free speech. I wish to repudiate in the strongest terms the profane language used against my fellow Council colleagues and the men and women of the Culver City Police Department. That behavior has no place in Culver City but especially in our Council Chambers. From a secular perspective, this room is the holy temple of public policy. This is where people of goodwill and good intentions meet to discuss and debate the critical issues that affect our City and our residents. What happened last week was a desecration of this chamber.

We on the Council hold different views and often disagree, sometimes vehemently, with one another. But, despite our differences, we respect one another and do not ascribe nefarious intentions to others' comments or votes. We are all acting in what we believe are the best interests of our City and its residents.

And, although we may disagree, those disagreements do not give license to anyone, either resident or non-resident, to make personal attacks or slanderous statements about my colleagues, our staff or other residents. I have some idea, based on the national temperament, why certain residents feel they can say whatever they want, whenever they want, wherever they want and on any social media platform they want, but that is



not something that any of us in Culver City should tolerate or allow to continue. I call out this bad behavior and verbal abuse for what it is: **hate speech!**

Now, we see **that this abuse** has permeated into our upcoming election for City Council. It is disheartening to read

the headline in this week's Culver City Observer – "City Council Race Turns Ugly." I was particularly upset at the second headline "Did City of Kindness Evaporate in Front of Our Eyes?" As someone who has been working hard along with the First Lady to brand our community as a City of Kindness, **I have to ask: "Is the City election so important to you that you are willing to soil your own reputation and the reputation of the City where you live?"** And you will soil your reputation, given that the Observer says it intends to name names. When we established the City of Kindness, **I asked the questions: "What is the alternative? To be known as a City of violence or a City of angry people?"**

**Well, if this behavior continues, I'm afraid we will all see just what that looks like.**

**So I call upon all of our residents who love living here and appreciate the benefits we enjoy from being Culver City residents to join with me and say "Enough is enough!" We shall no longer tolerate your profane, defamatory and personal attacks.** We are a City of Kindness, and kindness will overcome.

## Los Angeles Fisch

### Lee Fails to Se

At its February meeting, the Heart of LA Democratic Club, a new Los Angeles County-wide Democratic club which promotes equality and the full representation of women in local, state and national politics, voted to endorse Alex Fisch and Albert Vera for Culver City Council. The City elections will be held Tuesday, April 10.

HLADems President Lindsay Carlson says, "Our candidate questionnaire, townhall, and interview questions covered a wide-range of topics—from policies and issues that concern feminists and families, to local issues specific to Culver City, such as traffic and transporta-

## League of Co Endorse

Democratic Party candidate Sney Kamlager has been endorsed by the California League of Conservative Voters (CLCV) in her Tuesday, April 10, Special Election campaign for state assembly.

# Culver City OBSERVER

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## CORRECTION

Jay Wierenga, Communications Director of the Fair Political Practices Commission issued the following clarification to the statement which appeared in the March 15, 2018 edition of the Culver City Observer:

"First of all, we don't administer 'California State Election codes'. The Secretary of State monitors elections, and election code is not in our section of law. We only have jurisdiction over the Political Reform Act, so I would never and did not say anything about California State Election codes. I also do not recall and would likely not say we've been advised of a possible violation... I only say what I/we can say, that if we receive a complaint, we can confirm receipt of a complaint. No mention was made asking me/us if we received a complaint, so therefore I wouldn't have said that 'we'd been advised of a violation'. We did look up to see if there was a committee on file with the Secretary of State, and there did not appear to be."

# LETTERS

## Mr. Hadland,

Thank you for your article entitled "Council Race Turns Ugly". Attached are two photos of the cowardly communist on my doorstep, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and always looking down, away from the cameras, to hide his identity.

You may recall this almost identical hit piece was done two years ago against Goran Eriksson and Scott Wyant. I find these tactics revolting. The extremist, anti-business tone is particularly egregious, considering businesses provide jobs, salaries, goods, services and a huge portion of the city's tax revenue. I hope this negative campaigning backfires and that you are able to identify and expose these disgusting people.

Needless to say, I will only vote for Tiggs and Vera, based on this flyer.

Thanks again,  
John Aldaz  
Culver City Resident

*Editors Note: The photos submitted by Mr. Aldaz appear elsewhere in the this newspaper*

## Dear Editor,

Re "City Council Race Turns Ugly," March 15

The cowardly, mean-spirited, anonymous flyers attacking Albert Vera and Marcus Tiggs are the epitome of everything that's wrong with politics in this country today. It's what I've come to expect from national politics but I'd hoped that Culver City—"the City of Kindness"—was better than that. It's depressing to discover I'm wrong.

Since the flyers were clearly circulated by supporters of the other two candidates, I call on Daniel Lee and Alex Fisch to disavow and urge the end of such lowly tactics. And it's disingenuous to say it has nothing to do with them... as we already know from Russia's attacks on Hillary Clinton, what hurts one candidate automatically helps their opponent.

If Lee and Fisch refuse to take a public stand and call off the flyer circulators, then shame on them—they're no better than the "Ad Hoc Committee for Culver City Residents First." As should be pointed out, Vera and Tiggs supporters have circulated no such attack flyers against Lee and Fisch.

And no, I'm not a member of the Chamber of Commerce, though I do wonder why they are being painted as villains. Without the success of local businesses, Culver City would not be the thriving community it is today. I also wonder whether the flyer's mention of Andy Weissman, who is not running or on the council, means that these flyers are really a vendetta against him.

Kathy Barreto  
Culver City

## To the Editor:

Culver City Teacher's Pensions from Transparent California was the headline in Neil Rubenstein's column on March 15. Within this lengthy column (tackling many subjects) was a list of retired teachers' names and pension amounts, including ours, followed by this sentence.

"In 2016, Teacher pensions paid a total of \$11,390,424. In the opinion of many we need a Beverly Hills CPA and a Philadelphia lawyer to keep expenses under control, but now you know the real reason the school district needs more money its pensions and wages."

You might think that Mr. Rubenstein is simply misinformed, that he does not know that our pensions come from the State Teacher Retirement System (STRS), not the Culver City Unified School District budget. But wait – on February 22, in response to an earlier list of names and amounts in his column, you published a Letter to the Editor from our colleague and retired principal Dr. Marvin Brown, which clearly and cogently explained how STRS works, and that the money comes from a statewide fund into which educators, our employing districts and the state paid over the years of our employment.

Did Mr. Rubenstein read Dr. Brown's letter? Did your editor read it before printing it? Evidently not.

If Mr. Rubenstein continues writing about how our pensions contribute to CCUSD's financial burden, what does that say about other opinions he expresses?

Please print a retraction of his comments.

Sara Fields  
Gina Grawe

*Editors Note: The opinions of our columnists and letters to the editor are their own and not the position of the newspaper. Our policy is to run all printable points of view including rebuttals to our editorials and columnists.*

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## Mayor Cooper continued from page 1

crosses political lines, and is just outright mean and nasty," said the mayor. "All of us from both sides of the political arena need to stand up loud and clear and say enough of this bull shit, Culver City is better than this!"

Cooper also paid tribute to community leaders who died in the past year, including Scott Wyatt, Madeline Ehrlich, Margaret Lindgren, Vince Motyl, MaryAnn Fernandez, and Mim Shapiro.

"All were dedicated community members from different ends of the political spectrum, but the one big thing they had in common was their love for Culver City," he said.

He also paid tribute to the late Steve Rose, "the face of this Chamber and Culver City for many decades, and whose shoes will never be filled."

He stated that The "Citizen of the Year" – which was started last year by then Mayor Jim Clarke – will be re-named: the "Steve Rose Citizen of the Year".

The 2018 winner of the "Steve Rose Citizen of the Year" award will go to that "little flower, AKA, Earl Eskridge," he added.

The mayor also thanked his wife Rafia, his daughters and all who worked with him this year.

The full text of Mayor Cooper's speech can be found on the observer's website at: [www.culvercityobserver.com](http://www.culvercityobserver.com)

## Fox Hills continued from page 1

cussions, the developer has notified the City of its intention to forego presenting a community benefits proposal to the City Council on March 26th. The result of this decision means that the project will not be presented to the City Planning Commission in April as originally intended. It also means that any decision regarding a community benefits proposal or the project itself will be left up to the new Council to decide.

In a joint statement, Council members Eriksson and Clarke felt that more time was needed by all parties – the Fox Hills community, the City staff and the developer – to ascertain what type of project best fits the needs of the surrounding residents and the City as a whole. "It is our hope that all sides will utilize the time wisely to redesign a project that can be seen as an example of smart and practical development that adds value to Culver City's brand. We also recognize that postponing the project for now will not maintain the status quo as the Marshall's store has already given notice that it will close in a year.

It is incumbent upon everyone to ensure this valuable piece of property at the gateway to Culver City does not become decrepit and underutilized."

The development has been under attack by Fox Hills residents for over two years. During the 2016 City Council race flyers were distributed erroneously stating the plaza would be converted to a used car dealership.

The project known as 'The Bristol Parkway Comprehensive Plan' on the 6.25 acre commercial site would begin with the demolition of 60,157 sf retail buildings followed by development of 662 apartment units, 50 live work units, approximately 21,000 sf of retail space, 1,148 space subterranean parking structure; and over 3 acres of landscaped open space for public and private use.

Residents were concerned about the size of the project and the traffic congestion it would bring to a part of the city already suffering from traffic.

For more information, please contact Göran Eriksson at (310) 559-6015 or Jim Clarke at (310) 775-1664

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