

**T.O. OPENING REMARKS – Dec 14, 2025 (1233 words = 9.8 minutes)**

**Welcome to the 84<sup>th</sup> monthly meeting of *Making Waves for Democracy*! Today is the first day of Hanukkah...Despite the anti-Semitic mass shooting in Australia, we will light the first candle tonight!**

**Well, it's the end of 2025. It's been a long, hard year -- the hardest I've ever known...(Hitler and Manzanar were before my time).**

**BUT WE SURVIVED!**

**For the first time ever, I OWN the word PATRIOT. We are the patriots; we believe in the values that are American. We love that a Revolution birthed this country – with all its flaws. Even with the Founding Fathers – all white men, many owning slaves...I love that this country has progressed over time – I'll never forget what Stacy Abrams taught me: that only 3% of the population could legally vote in 1776! We've had to fight all along the 250 years for our rights, and we ain't done yet...**

**I've become sentimental in my old age.**

**And I still cry whenever the Declaration of Independence is read, OR – since it came out 77 years ago this month, in December 1948, *the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights* -- which says in part: QUOTE “We reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of every human person, in equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small....Affirmed are the rights and freedoms from slavery, torture, degrading punishment....” UNQUOTE**

**Isn't that beautiful?**

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**Let's review how we survived this year -- the darkest-ever:**

**we've learned that self-care is a must. And then many of us have engaged in mutual aid, dropping off groceries to immigrants whose fear keeps them inside, which benefits all parties.**

**We've found and stayed connected with each other.**

**And we've boycotted and protested. Over and over again. We've learned that sustained, decentralized protest feels great. And makes a difference! (BTW, there's a protest against Trump every Saturday from 11-12:30 at City Hall in Culver City....I go every week I can....See you there?)**

**We've changed in this past year. At least I have.**

**We've said I don't know many times.**

**We've opened our minds and we've learned a lot...**

**We've relied on each other. I will never forget my old friend who came over last March and held me while I cried and confessed I had no vision for the first time in my life -- I didn't see the way out of this, the way out of no way... She held the faith for me for that moment.**

**But I'm baaack now!**

**And we've grown lots and lots of new leaders! There are too many to choose from nationally! – Everyone who has started a Substack or a group Zoom or a book club or taken any action against this regime....I see you! And while it's not here yet (alas!), the bare beginnings of the new world has been outlined in**

the darkness of this year... A true democracy with lots and lots of leaders. The seeds of the new multiracial democracy we've hoped and fought for our whole lives, a new multigenerational world...which is up next....

We've learned a lot this year: I can't forget that 19 million voters who voted for Joe Biden in 2020 did not vote in 2024. And that Trump won because his economic promises – which he lied about – won late voters, and occasional voters, and a disproportionate number of Latinos and young voters, mostly male.

We've learned that the Right, the Republican Party, although they LIE -- organized better in 2024 than the Democrats.... And they used social media better than us.

But they cannot hide forever the fact that their coalition is every kind of bad there is! Or that they LIE. Or that they are incompetent at governing —and unable to tackle today's challenges.

I hated Bernie Sanders and his Bernie Bros in 2016 – their misogyny shone too brightly. But I agree with him now. One fact he cites every email: Today, 60% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. That's astonishing in the richest country in the history of the world. AND YES WE WANT our money back, the stolen dollars, the \$80 TRILLION that has gone to the top 1% from the bottom 90% in the past 50 years.

(Just a reminder that one trillion is a MILLION MILLIONS!)

WE WANT THE OLIGARCHS, the billionaires, GONE or at least we want them to pay their fair share of TAXES in the future.....

**We stand on the precipice of 2026, when I think we will finally bring down MAGA/Trumpism....and begin to set this right....**

**But beware the “specter of cruelty” that the Right will unleash over the months ahead...Because we are WINNING and they are losing and are they are the meanest ever – rotten to the core – so it will get worse before it gets better. Remember, ICE isn’t gone from LA yet.....So get those whistles out and be ready to act.**

**I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: it’s a United Front moment and in a two-party system, we are with the Democrats....and we cannot afford to splinter the growing coalition. We need both MODERATES and PROGRESSIVES, both young up-and-coming political leaders AND oldsters....**

**We need everyone!**

**By the way, those of you who can stand to listen to the BS, keep the relationship with your MAGA relatives. Especially now, especially as they are losing. Find out WHY they are diehard supporters of the Republican Party.... Invite them to join you at the next protest.... We need them.**

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**Finally, I want to talk about the long-term future. We are gonna build back better....(to coin a phrase....). This a time for dreaming of the world we want after Trumpism/MAGA go.**

**I invite you to dream too!**

**Thomas Paine said about 250 years ago: “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” I agree with Heather Cox Richardson: we do again...**

**As Susie T. Buell says in her weekly newsletter, The Rising: QUOTE “This year has taught us that ...(the) natural ... cycle is: day turns into night. Light dims, making room for the dark....Entering the dark is where often where the master class in soul work happens”. This is the “pause where transformation takes place”. UNQUOTE                      Wow!**

**There’s a paper by two young women of color that has deeply affected me. It’s written by Ai-Jen Poo, the head of National Domestic Workers Alliance and Lorella Praeli, co-ED of Community Change – It’s called 3 Earths: A way of understanding our present moment. It was published last May but has some thinking that is still relevant today.**

**Earth 1 is the pre-Trump world, the functioning liberal democracy that we thought was permanent. With all its flaws, it’s important to find and keep the good things about it: the rule of law, due process, civil society, DEI, etc.**

**Earth 2 is what we are now in. It’s Trumpism; it’s galloping fascism. It’s Project 2025. It’s the patriarchal confederacy. Or confederate patriarchy (depending on your politics).... It’s the destruction of all we’ve known and fought for our whole life. And by the way, in a word, it’s UnAmerican!**

**Earth 3 is the world we want. It’s beyond our current reality but it’s rooted in fairness, in safety, belonging, in universal caring for ourselves and each other. Earth 3 is love. Ai-Jen calls it a “spectacle of caring.”**

**Let’s work to build Earth 3 together.**

**30-30-30**