

2/262023 T.O. Opening Remarks MAKING WAVES for DEMOCRACY

Welcome to the 58th meeting of MAKING WAVES FOR DEMOCRACY, formerly Team T.O. Resist and Rise, formerly Team T.O.....We aren't meeting monthly this year but we are meeting regularly, every 5 weeks or so....

Well, this election cycle we have a new job to do – you'll hear about it today...But I want to be direct with you. We failed last cycle in our job: to flip at least one or two House seats in order to help hold the House....In the press, we were eclipsed by Florida's outrageous jerrymandering of I think 5 House seats, and the absurd Long Island, NY, 4 flips, including George Santos.....BUT, we did not do our part to keep Kevin McCarthy out of power...AND TODAY WE'LL LEARN WHY....And I swear we'll succeed next time!

One of my favorite quotations is: Benjamin Franklin's "ENERGY AND PERSISTENCE CONQUER ALL THINGS." That's my experience, and I wholeheartedly believe we will take back the House and hold the Senate and White House in 2024.

SO....What's been on my mind?

I retired in early December so transition is on my mind a lot....Thinking about my memoirs, my life's journey. And thinking

about the next steps here in my most important work these days, **MAKING WAVES FOR DEMOCRACY**. At Making Waves, we have a new Leadership Team – you just met them, and you’ll hear from some of them more later today and you’ll see why I’m thrilled at the changes....

I’m also too aware of the crises we face in this world today – (although I gather the **RELENTLESS RAIN** is **NOT** linked to one of them....) Maurice Mitchell names the crises in his brilliant piece in NonProfit quarterly journal, *BUILDING RESILIENT ORGANIZATIONS: Toward Joy and Durable Power in a Time of Crisis*: (QUOTE) “This moment is one of multiple, overlapping crises: a global pandemic, rising authoritarianism, climate emergency, political violence, unprecedented economic inequality....” They “all exacerbate interpersonal tension points.” (END QUOTE) His piece is about the threats posed by **OURSELVES** to the organizations, usually nonprofits, that comprise the infrastructure of our growing progressive social movement, but these “isms and schisms” -- as I have always called them -- also affect our lives as individuals and all our relationships whether or not we work in social change organizations.

His article is a long one, meant for a “movement” audience, not mainstream folks. We’ll send a link to it with our follow-up to this meeting, but my point here today is:

We need to be tolerant and kind – AND we need to realize we’re in a time that requires BUILDING UNITY, building coalitions...It’s a UNITED FRONT moment, NOT a time of division and separation. Progressives —and every single social movement I’ve been part of over 50+ years -- has had a self-destructive tendency to cannibalize its leaders, and to infight. We have NOT learned the lesson of Germany in the 1930s – when Hitler rose to power on a *minority* platform because of the divisions on the left. If MAGA prevails, it’s on us, the vast majority.

Today you will hear about a better path forward for all of us.... Remember, in California, there are 5 seats that went heavily for Biden in 2020 – 3 of them in SoCal! But it will require ENERGY AND PERSISTENCE from each of us....Keeping our eyes on the prize.... ORGANIZING, speaking to all potential allies, not just those who think like us.

Moving forward strategically will require what we are good at here at Making Waves for Democracy: the right ANALYSIS of the issue.

So to start us off today, I want to bring up Brian Colker. He will help us LEARN what really happened in the November midterms, so that we are smarter and more strategic going forward. I love this guy. His mind should be a national treasure. Brian, you’re on!