

T.O. Opening Remarks – Making Waves for Democracy Sept 18, 2022

WELCOME TO THE 54th monthly MEETING OF MAKING WAVES FOR DEMOCRACY since we started in March 2017!

WELL WELL WELL, IT'S BEEN A HELL OF A WEEK! If you ever wondered how fascism took hold in Germany, it became really clear to me this week as I witnessed some local history. Here's how it went down, and then a few lessons/thoughts:

Just after 7 a.m. Wednesday, I was up, dressed in shorts and t-shirt ready to head out on my morning walk, when I got my morning call from my BFF Sheila Kuehl – her voice was a bit strained, but when I heard a man's voice in the background and she said: "I need some back up here", I raced over there in 10 minutes and witnessed most of the incident -- although neither Sheila nor I saw until yesterday that picture of the battering ram they would have used had she not come right to the door....

I saw the many armed Sheriff's deputies – some outside and most crowding with us into the living room. Then they swarmed and searched the house, later bringing a dog to sniff – for what? Drugs? Bombs? – and prevented us from going upstairs where Sheila has her office since she works mostly from home. As you've seen, they took her two phones, her computers and a bunch of old TV shows

on electronic storage devices. I hope they enjoy her pilots from 1964, “Broadside” and “Zelda”! And the many texts and emails folks sent Sheila on her personal phone before they realized she wasn’t getting them....

The media is getting to the truth about this “bogus” investigation, clearly retaliation – and one of 5 simultaneously undertaken. Let me just say that the Sheriff way overreached this time; he has more than met his match!

A few thoughts:

1) Standing up to bullying is empowering. *FIGHTING BACK IS KEY.* Sheila says: “Taking your power clears your mind.” She sure took her power that day – she didn’t know if they were going to handcuff her when she marched outside barefoot to talk directly to the media in the street for 3 hours (without coffee).

2) The silence by most elected folks has been deafening. (There are a few great exceptions: Mike Bonin, Karen Bass, Hilda Solis, Lindsey Horvath, Christy Smith).... And the prosecutors Like DA Gascon are clear this is bogus.

BUT the outpouring by everyday people has more than made up for it: hundreds of notes, flowers, cookies showed up on Sheila’s doorstep – and wonderful texts, emails, social media posts,

and letters to the editor.... Strangers and friends alike rose up as if in one voice and said THIS IS NOT OKAY.

3) My big point is this: THIS IS HOW WE FIGHT THE CREEPING FASCISM in this country!

Yes, there's silence by the powerful. And some media buys into the rightwing message that something bad must have happened for the Sheriff to act this way.... The headline on a local online rag today was "Kuehl Bribery Charge investigated".

But the **OVERWHELMING REACTION** by people was instinctively supporting -- Even Next Door -- not known for its progressive spin -- was overwhelmingly right on.

Do all those supportive people know that Sheila is **THE** most boringly ethical person ever -- she won't even jaywalk with me! Do they know she was voted **MOST ETHICAL** (and **MOST INTELLIGENT**, I might add) in Sacramento for years and years during her extraordinary service for up there? I doubt it!

Read today's *LATimes* -- both Robin Abcarian's column called "Our Vindictive Sheriff turns up the crazy" and the editorial titled "Sheriff is LA's Loosest Cannon and Pettiest Cop" -- both are perfect.

MY FINAL POINT:

This saga has driven home the point that **WE MUST DOUBLE DOWN ON EXPANDING BLUE POWER** this November and in

the long term. This November's outcome is still up to US!

If you have never doorknocked, NOW is the time. Canvassing is THE proven way to get to voters. We have 50 days till Nov 8, only 21 before ballots come in the mail. We totally can win. Think Kansas if you doubt! BUT WE MUST ACT!

And down the line, every seat in office counts, so make sure you are voting for the person who themselves will stand up to this kind of abuse of power. As Sheila says: for LA County Sheriff, "it's either a Luna or a lunatic!"

And for you today, this means: PLEASE doorknock and donate for our candidates Christy Smith and Jay Chen and Karen Bass.

If not now, WHEN????

(Note: The main question I got after this little talk was: What legal recourse does Sheila have?....Can the Sheriff be sued for this?

Answer: Right now, Sheila is focusing on getting her phones back!

There will be time to figure out the longer-term strategy.)