

# DONKEY TRACKS

MAY 2023

#bluetothe core

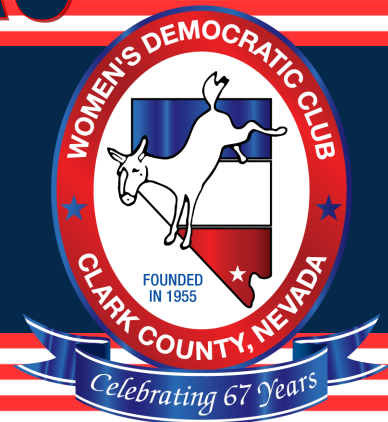
Visit our web site at:

[www.womensdemo.com](http://www.womensdemo.com)

Women's Democratic Club of Clark County



@womensdemocc



Marla Turner  
President



Rhonda Nolen  
1st Vice President



Margie Gonzales  
2nd Vice President



Dawn Dudas,  
Treasurer



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Mary Ella Holloway  
Recording Secretary



Ida Gaines  
Inspirationalist



# A Message from our President

Hi Everyone,

This month I'd like to take the time to point out achievements by some of our amazing members. Let's take a look:



## **MARGIE GONZALES – WDC Second Vice-President**



In March, Women's Demo Second Vice-President Margie Gonzales received an "Exceptional Woman" award from Commissioner Tick Segerblom for Women's History Month ceremonies conducted by the Clark County Commission. She was recognized for her work in southern Nevada since coming here from the Philippines. Said Segerblom, "Mm-hmm. Margie is everything. She came from the Philippines where she was active in the government, worked for the President's office and the legislature in the Philippines before she came here. She's retired from TSA, and now if you want to do anything in the

Filipino community, you reach out to Margie. She knows everybody, has volunteered for everything."

## **RUBY DUNCAN – Community Activist and Icon**



Last February, Ms. Duncan received a standing ovation from the Clark County Commission for her history-making "anti-poverty work, including organizing a group of 200 women to speak at the Legislature in the 1970s, that championed for welfare, nutrition programs and food stamps in Nevada through the nonprofit Operation Life" as stated in the Las Vegas Review Journal. "Duncan and other co-founders of Operation Life did more to combat poverty 'than anybody in

our state's history,' Commissioner Ross Miller said. 'Nevada at that time was the Mississippi of the West and Ruby took that on, head-on, and established a nutrition program, food stamps, went up to the Legislature and fought tough battles and endured some very significant intimidation.' "



## MICHELLE MAESE – SEIU Nevada Local 1107 President



On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Women’s Demo member and president of SEIU Nevada Local 1107 received the 2023 “Legacy Builder’s Award” from the Las Vegas NAACP for her work with SEIU. Ms. Maese has advocated for reform of police violence on school campuses, lobbied against Assembly Bill 108 to protect Nevada’s nurses and healthcare system from removing certain licensing requirements that would allow for out of state nurses to work here, advocated for legislation to create Juneteenth as a legal, paid state holiday, continued pressure to hold fast on the rights of workers, and much more. Ms. Maese is the first

Black woman to hold the position of president of SEIU Local 1107.

## SHELLEY BERKLEY AND DR. LARRY LEHRNER



On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Honorable Shelley Berkley and her husband, Dr. Larry Lehrner, were recognized as Tikkun Olam 2023 Justice Michael A. Cherry Community Service Award Honorees for their work as advocates in our community and for their commitment to social justice.

In addition to being a practicing physician, Dr. Lehrner owns and manages several local restaurants. Ms. Berkley will be retiring from Touro University this summer after a decade of service, currently as the Senior Vice President of the Touro University system, and previously as the CEO and Senior Provost of Touro

University Western Division. She was also the first woman to be elected to serve the Clark County district in the U.S. Houses of Representatives where she served for seven terms.

Congratulations to our magnificent members with great appreciation for all you do!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Marla'.

Marla Turner, President  
Women’s Democratic Club of Clark County



**Women's Democratic Club of  
Clark County presents**

**ASIAN  
AMERICAN  
AND PACIFIC  
ISLANDER  
HERITAGE MONTH**

***"The History of AAPI in Politics"***



Ms. Rozita Lee  
Featured Speaker

**THURSDAY, May 11, 2023  
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
SEIU Nevada Local 1107  
2250 S Rancho Dr STE 165  
Las Vegas, NV 89102**

**There is no charge** to attend - all Democrats are welcome!  
Lunch available for purchase no later than Tuesday, May 9, 2023.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3HqjUQt> to purchase lunch

No lunch? RSVP to [info@womensdemo.com](mailto:info@womensdemo.com)

2023



# MEETING SCHEDULE

| JUNE   | JULY   | AUGUST   | SEPT  | OCT   | NOV                                     | DEC   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>June 15*</b><br><b>EVENING</b><br>Meeting | <b>July 15</b><br>Annual<br>Daytime<br>BBQ<br>Pool<br>Party -<br>NO<br>MEETING | <b>August 10</b><br><b>LUNCH</b><br>Meeting -<br>Women's<br>Equality Day<br>Awards | <b>Sept 14</b><br><b>EVENING</b><br>Meeting and<br>Officer<br>Elections | <b>October 14</b><br>Annual<br>Spotlight<br>Dinner -<br>NO<br>MEETING | <b>Nov 9</b><br><b>LUNCH</b><br>Meeting | <b>Dec 9**</b><br>Annual<br>Holiday<br>Party -<br>NO<br>Meeting |

### Notes

- \* June's meeting has been changed to June 15th instead of June 8.
- \*\* Tentative Date



## NEW MEMBERSHIP—2023

### January

Nicole Bhat  
Jennifer Brown  
Forrest Darby  
Francine Green  
Stephanie Alvendia

### February

Cecia Alvarado

### March

Marbella Alfonzo  
Blanca Ortiz  
Sabrina Torres

### April

Honey Borla  
Anthony Doyle  
Estifania Esparza  
Sharifa Wahab  
Kevin Wong

# Carol's Corner

## By Carol Chesnut



### We're Dying For Profits!

### How to Cure Our Drugged System

© Carol Chesnut

In 2019, before Covid –19 struck, life expectancy in the US had fallen so much that relative to other first world countries, that 500,000 Americans were dying each year in excess of citizens of comparable countries. Even privileged Americans have worse outcomes than the *average* citizen in other places in the world in infant and maternal mortality, colon cancer, childhood acute lymphocytic leukemia, and acute myocardial infarction.

This is despite the fact that we spend \$12,914 per year per person, and their average cost is \$6, 125! That is an excess cost of \$2.3 Trillion a year for our citizens! And we have worse outcomes! No wonder we believe we cannot cover everyone. So just what ails our system, and how do we fix it?

One fundamental change is that we have allowed our corporations to take control of what doctors and the public accept as medical knowledge. Universities have suddenly been drawn into the marketplace by the reduced government and foundation funding of research and data and the concomitant increase in corporate funding. The threat to researchers funding if they report results unfavorable to their corporate benefactors is real; and the pressure of that over time has compromised the objectivity of the results. What once was examined for the social and scientific benefit to society has been converted to a bottom- line benefit for the corporations.

The Bayh-Dole Act, passed in 1980, purportedly to make our markets competitive against those in Japan, allowed Universities and non-profit organizations to commercialize federally funded research, and to retain profits on patents for pharmaceuticals. In one fell swoop, universities were commercialized and became part of our medical/industrial complex. Drug companies admit (internally anyway) their data **are developed to increase their profits, and articles published on them are designed to be given to doctors to convince them to prescribe those drugs** for their patients.

That might be OK if the journal articles underwent real, independent peer review and analysis. But, at present, they do not. In 24% of clinical trial contracts, the drug company may include its own statistical analysis of the results in journal articles. 50% allow the sponsor to write up the results for publication and the researchers may “suggest” revisions. Journals do not require the drug companies to submit their data and reports to the journal prior to publication, because, according to an editor of a respected medical journal, “That would be a death spiral for the journal”. They are dependent on the drug company’s purchase of their articles (as sales documents) to continue to exist.



In the US, brand named drugs cost 3.5 times more than in other developed countries. In 2008, the annual cost of a new drug in the US was \$2115, and in 2022 that cost had escalated to \$257,000.

Why do we pay such exorbitant prices for our drugs? Three main differences between our policies and those of other developed countries account for most of it. First, we have no formal way to negotiate prices. Second, insurance pays most of the costs, so there is no market derived discipline. Third, we are too dazzled by our own innovative power and its mythology. Too many new products are being sold today without sufficient evaluation for benefits to the public.

Germany has an independent agency which evaluates drugs for their benefits and hazards to the public. It found from 2011-2017 only 54 were of major or considerable benefit, 37 were of minor benefit, and there was no proof of added benefit for 125 of the drugs.

What is the cure for our systemic malaise? First, we need to be sure that the evidence- base of medicine is accurate and complete. That requires independent review. Second, we need similarly accurate, transparent health technology assessment. Third, we need to control the prices of brand-named drugs. And fourth, and perhaps most fundamental, we need to understand that strong regulations are our friend, the viable safeguard for public health, both physical and fiscal! Since the only measurement corporations value is bottom-line profit, the regulations need to be enforced vigorously and with penalties that substantially impact the bottom line. It is the only thing corporations will pay heed to!

Health care is not a “free” market set of goods like Adam Smith’s in which consumers shop for their bread, meat, and beer, and in which they are able to evaluate how good they are and have that ability to the same degree as the sellers of those goods. It is a set of what economists call “credence goods”, those which cannot be evaluated directly by the consumer. We must all rely on the evaluation of experts. And we must set up a system in which those evaluations are honest and unbiased. No other system makes sense for our citizens!

How do we get there? We must end what amounts to a system of corporate bribery with election reform, new stringent regulations as a guard-rail on greed, and uniformly enforce policing of standards. Vote out anyone who does not support those reforms. Your life and the lives of all those you love aren’t safe unless and until you do!

# *Sharing Our Legacy*

*By Judy Klein*



Last week, we lost a lifetime member of Women’s Demo. Paul Aizley always made us laugh and never missed a meeting when he was home. He served in the Nevada Legislature for three (3) terms and was a favorite of all legislators. He was the “old man” of the crew and he seemed to enjoy that title. He was bright as a bulb and, why not, he was a math professor! He used to say, zero is a number but infinity is not! His wife, Sari passed a few years ago and she was the love of his life. Both were lifelong members of Women’s Democratic Club of Clark County (“WDC”). Paul served as chair of the American Civil Liberties Union (“ACLU”) and always served his community and state with pride. He always supported WDC and was a personal friend to many of us here, and those that will be welcoming him on his arrival! Baruch ha’shem, may his memory be a blessing and may we all remember this kind human being.

We are going into Spotlight Dinner preparation mode so you will be seeing a lot of reminders about our event and how you can purchase tickets. I’d like to remind everyone, if you have an extra bottle of wine you would like to donate to our Silent Auction Wine Barrel, please feel free to bring it with you to the next meeting(s). Some lucky bidder is going to have a lot of wine bottles on **Saturday, October 14, 2023!**

We welcome your support! Every dollar raised goes, entirely, to the 2024 Democratic candidates!



# COMMENTARY

## By Linda Benesch

Is your salary less than \$160,200?

If so, you're among the 94 percent of American workers who pay into Social Security all year long. Thanks to a loophole that exclusively benefits the affluent, income above that amount simply isn't taxed for Social Security.

That means someone like Tucker Carlson, who makes a reported \$8 million a year, stopped contributing to Social Security on January 8. Joe Rogan, who reportedly makes \$4 million a month, stopped contributing on January 2.

That's how quickly these high rollers cleared that \$160,200 benchmark. But this isn't even the worst of it.

Many billionaires receive all of their money in the form of bonuses and stock options. Elon Musk is the highest paid CEO in the world, but because none of it is "wage income," he doesn't pay a single penny into Social Security.

Right-wing politicians and cable news pundits frequently say that we "can't afford" Social Security. Their solution? Cut benefits for working people who've paid into the program for our entire lives.

They never suggest that we simply require the wealthiest people in America to pay into Social Security all year long, just like the rest of us. If we taxed them like we tax everyone else, we could afford not just to protect our benefits, but expand them.

The Social Security Expansion Act would do just that. This bill would require the wealthy to contribute into Social Security on all their income over \$250,000 - including investment income. And it would use the additional revenue to increase Social Security benefits and keep the program strong.

Another piece of legislation, Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust, would also lift the cap on Social Security contributions and use the revenue to expand benefits. It had the support of about 90 percent of House Democrats in the last Congress.

The movement to finally require the wealthy to pay into Social Security all year long isn't limited to Congress. President Joe Biden campaigned on lifting the cap and using the revenue for targeted benefit expansions.

Polling shows that the idea has widespread support among the public, including 76 percent of all voters and 65 percent of Republican voters. Unfortunately, Republican politicians are not listening to their voters.

The Republican Study Committee, a group that counts 156 House Republicans as members, released a budget last year that would make massive cuts to Social Security benefits, including raising the full retirement age to 70. It doesn't raise one dime of additional revenue from the wealthy.

These politicians are focused on protecting their wealthy donors, who pay less into Social Security than ever. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) recently found that as inequality increases, a record share of all earnings are above the \$160,200 cap on Social Security contributions.

In 1983, the last time Congress made major reforms to Social Security, they set the cap at a level that covered 90 percent of all wage income, leaving only 10 percent above the cap. By 2021, the percentage of income above that cap had nearly doubled. And that doesn't even include investment income which, as in Musk's case, accounts for the bulk of the income of the wealthiest.

EPI estimates that rising inequality has cost the Social Security Trust Fund \$1.4 trillion. That's a massive windfall for the wealthy — and a massive loss for our Social Security system and the millions of Americans who rely on it.

Congress has the power to end this injustice. All it would take is Republican politicians listening to their voters and joining with Democrats to require the wealthy to pay into Social Security on all of their income, just like the rest of us do.

This column originally appeared in [Otherwords.org](https://www.otherwords.org).

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LINDA BENESCH

Linda Benesch is the Communications Director at Social Security Works

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POLICY, POLITICS AND COMMENTARY

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# WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CLARK COUNTY

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Print

# 2023

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook \_\_\_\_\_ Twitter \_\_\_\_\_

Instagram \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

**I affirm that I am registered to vote with the Democratic Party in the State of Nevada: Yes [ ]**  
(Only a registered Democrat can be a member)

**General Membership:** \$35 Annual Dues Paid By: Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash [ ]

**Past WDC Presidents and Current Students:** \$15 Annual Dues Paid By: Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash [ ]

**Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund Donation:** Paid By: Check [ ] Money Order [ ] Cash { } Online [ ]

**I am interested in participating on the following Committees:**  
(you will be notified if there are vacancies available)

Ambassador Committee [ ] Candidate Donation Distribution Committee [ ] Communications/Media [ ]

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