

Difficult Birth—But DNC Board is Born

Strong Turnout Thrills, Strains Volunteer Organizers; Informal Complaints Arise, Formal Protests Possible

The Downtown Neighborhood Council (DNC) elected members to its 27-seat board of directors last week, wrapping up an election process that drew approximately 1,800 votes for candidates in various categories, with a roughly equal split between absentee ballots and on-site voters. (See complete list of board members on page 4).

The balloting at the Richard J. Riordan Central Library also drew a host of complaints about the polling process from various parties, including some candidates and at least one community organization. Complaints ranged from the presence of candidates volunteering at the polls to

accusations of politicking too close to actual ballot box.

Mike Pfeiffer, who chaired the election committee, said the League of Women Voters, which oversaw the elections, settled several complaints at the polls on election day.

"I'm really very happy with the process," said Pfeiffer. "We had the highest turnout of any Neighborhood Council election in the city, as far as I know."

Pete White, an organizer with the Community Action Network (CAN), a Downtown community organization that



Looks Like a Winner: Lynn Myers turns to Qathryn Brehm as the two volunteered at the polls during elections for the Downtown Neighborhood Council's board of directors. Myers and Brehm both won seats on the board.

saw three members of its slate of 12 candidates win seats on the board, said the group plans to file informal protests.

White said CAN's main complaint was the presence of candidates working at the polls—or just working the polls, as in campaigning at the election site. He said, that any complaint will stop short of a formal protest, however; instead the group plans to send letters for the record to the DNC, the Los Angeles City Council, and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), the city agency that oversees Neighborhood Councils.

(CAN has not asked any of the individual candidates on its slate to forego any protests.)

White said also saw a clear upside to the balloting, however. He credited the election process with drawing many

low-income and homeless residents into the political process, erasing for many a history of personal skepticism about government.

"This was reinvigorating for the community overall—to get behind a process they believed in," White said. "So we can and will live with the results—but we are going to point out some obvious discrepancies that we felt were apparent at the polls."

Several losing candidates as well as some voters wondered about the nearly two full days it took the DNC elections committee to announce the results after the polls closed on Tuesday, September 17th.

Pfeiffer noted that the elections committee could have used more volunteers. He also invited critics to join the process for the DNC's next election, which could come

shortly, since a seat representing residents on the western flank of Downtown went unfilled for lack of a candidate.

"I look forward to seeing any critics of this election participate in the elections committee for the next one," Pfeiffer said. "I hope that any of the people who complain will be there to volunteer."

One candidate with no complaints was Brady Westwater, who won a seat representing the arts/cultural/education category.

"I can't believe that," Westwater said after being told of his victory. "I only campaigned for 20 minutes online."

(Neighborhood Councils were established under the Los Angeles City Charter as advisory bodies to the City Council in hopes of providing residents, business interests and other "stakeholders" a more direct voice in local government.)

Downtown Neighborhood Council Board of Governors

Winners of September 17th election, as announced by the Downtown Neighborhood Council.

RESIDENTS

Alameda East
Gene Boutilier

Bunker Hill
Saied Kashani

Central City East
Kareem Muhammad

City West
(No Candidate)

Civic Center
Simon Jun

Fashion District
James Fosset

Historic Downtown
Christopher McCoy

South Park
Santiago Gomez

Area-Wide
Douglas Wance

AREA-WIDE HOMELESS
Andrew Johnson

BUSINESS

Alameda East
Daniel R. Horwath

Central City East/Toy District
Richard Meruelo

City West
Keven Tamaki

Downtown Center
Mark Tarczynski

Historic Downtown
Pierre R. Toulakany

Fashion District
Lynn Myers

South Park
Martha Saucedo
Area-Wide
Anne Samuelson

ARTS/CULTURAL/ EDUCATION

Kjell Hagen
Qathryn Brehm
Brady Westwater

AREA-WIDE ARTIST
Kimmy McCann

SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Elizabeth R. Russell
Orlando Ward
Jeffrey L. Bird

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEE
Gary Jacoby

PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEE
Eddie Olivas III