

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, December 21, 2010

### Oakland's big surprises, stunning upsets in 2010

Chip Johnson, San Francisco Chronicle 12/21/2010

Well, another year has come and nearly gone bringing us big surprises, stunning upsets and lots of changes in political fortunes. Some stars rose quickly, and others fell hard. The following is but a small sampling of the most popular, engaging and interesting events of the fleeting year.

**IRV:** In Oakland, it could stand for "I Really Voted?" Because those three letters - shorthand for "instant-runoff voting" - led to a stunning upset in last month's mayor's race.

Front runner Don Perata, an influential Democrat, was out-flanked by two City Council members who ran a slate campaign asking voters to select them Nos. 1 and 2 in any order. Under the new election rules, voters rank their top three choices. Second- and third- place votes are redistributed as candidates with the fewest first-places are eliminated. Perata collected one-third of all the first-place votes, but was virtually locked out as a second-place candidate.

**Queen Jean:** Oakland Mayor-elect Jean Quan pulled off the local election upset of the decade by knocking off Perata, one of the most powerful political figures in the state. She benefited from the new aforementioned voting system as well as one of the most polarizing elections in the city's history. She and at-large council member Rebecca Kaplan, who finished third, ran a campaign based on the unpopularity of their main rival as well as their own virtues. And it worked.

**The verdict:** A jury found former BART police officer Johannes Mehserle guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the 2009 New Year's Day shooting death of Oscar Grant. Mehserle was sentenced to two years in prison for killing Grant, 20. The case reopened the sensitive subject of police abuse in the black community. Given credit for time served, Mehserle is eligible for release in about seven months. The Nov. 5 sentence from a Los Angeles judge sparked demonstrations in Oakland that led to more than 150 arrests.

**Island politics:** In July, Alameda City Council member Lena Tam was accused of passing off city-state secrets to a developer vying to re-develop the old Alameda Naval Air Station. City officials investigated, but the Alameda County district attorney's office filed no charges. Now the East Bay Municipal Utility District manager wants the city to foot her \$44,000 legal bill.

**Out of the crosshairs:** For the fourth consecutive year, Oakland's homicide rate dropped in 2010 - a trend seen across the nation. With less than 100 homicides likely by year's end, it would mark the first time since 2005, when the city recorded 95 slayings.

**The cavalry ain't coming:** In July, drastic budget shortfalls in Oakland compelled the layoff of 80 Oakland police officers and forced the City Council to come up with a way to save the positions of up to 120 others. They responded with a half-dozen new tax initiatives, including a \$360 a year parcel tax for police salaries. It failed and the issue now sits on Mayor-elect Quan's plate like a half-finished dinner.

**We don't ask, we don't care:** Victoria Kolakowski, formerly an administrative law judge in Alameda County, became the nation's first transgender judge. She collected 51 percent of the vote to defeat John Creighton in last month's election.

**Going, going gone!** It cost him more than \$1 million, but state Treasurer Bill Lockyer did secure a seat for his wife, Nadia, on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Her campaign raised about \$1.6 million, and 80 percent of it came from her husband's campaign fund. Her campaign war chest rivaled that of a congressional campaign.

**Athletic moves:** Earlier this month, Oakland Planning Commission officials laid out the latest stadium proposal to entice the Oakland Athletics ownership to keep the team in the town because A's owner Lew Wolff has tried to ditch us for Fremont already. The proposal for Victory Court Stadium calls for a 39,000 seat, baseball-only stadium on the Oakland waterfront just east of Jack London Square.

**Dellums recedes:** Last but not least, in August, Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums announced he would not seek re-election - and residents exhaled.

He is expected to be out of the mayor's office by the end of the week.