



**PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**

**BIG CHANGES
REGARDING DUES
FOR 2020 AND 2021**

**MEET
THE
BEC**

**THE "COMMON" IS
RARELY SO?**

Story of Courage

11...11...11

Early Sonora
Family
Celebrating
the Holidays



Message from the "Big Sir

Gene Zaroni (209-532-1989) Last month's in-person Branch Executive Committee Meeting (the "BECM") was held once again at the Eproson Park in Twain Harte (October 13, 2020). Specifically, in the right field foul territory of the baseball facility. The balmy autumn afternoon weather could not have cooperated more fully for it presented a refreshing atmosphere by which to conduct our affairs.

SIRS Mission

To improve the lives
of our members
through fun
activities and events
- while making
friends for life.

Items of interest that surfaced at this BECM included an attempt to incorporate more widespread participation by all members in attendance, particularly as it related to those business matters open for general discussion. To assist in resolving this matter, three elementary *ground rules* were introduced to the assembly and they included the following: (A) business is to be conducted in the exact sequence dictated in the agenda; (B) Only one member is permitted to speak at one time. If you wish to speak, raise your hand to be recognized beforehand; (C) Provide only thoughtful and concise remarks. Such provisions have helped to some extent, nevertheless, the situation remains a work-in-progress. After all, a silent voice is impossible to interpret regarding substance of thought.

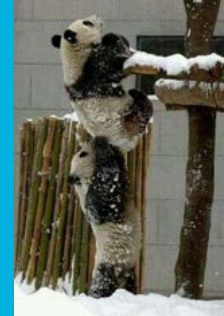
Important to note, your BEC has decided to cancel our Annual Christmas Party due exclusively to the numerous hardships contributed by the persisting Coronavirus. Hopefully, next year our situation will change and allow us to return to a state of “normalcy” that will permit us to have this much anticipated special event.

As was reported last month, regarding our annual raffle activities for the fiscal period beginning September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020, we filed with the State of California both an APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION (Form CT-NRP-1) and the NONPROFIT RAFFLE REPORT (Form CT-NRP-2). On October 2, 2020, we received an acknowledgement of the Nonprofit Raffle Registration Confirmation relevant to the subsequent fiscal period. Thereby, our latest registration is valid from September 1, 2020 and will expire on August 31, 2021.

Although it currently is in its formative stage, your BEC is attempting to establish a program of dispensing anniversary lapel pins as a token of sincerity to honor and provide recognition to our valued long-term members. Those who qualify must possess membership within the SIR organization (from any branch) for a minimum of five years. Designation of these pins will change for every five-year increments of membership. For this reason, I have a special request for *only* those members that previously possessed membership in a different branch prior to transferring into our branch: which is, to notify me of your original installation date into SIRs. Thus, this will help establish the proper designated year pin for which you are currently eligible. Your feedback will help substantiate that our records may require updating to reflect your correct membership profile. I eagerly await your response since your cooperation is necessary to ensure this program is properly administered. Thank you in advance for your anticipated courtesy.

2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.

*Friendships...
even the animals
cherish them.*



One Panda helping another.



Sea Otters hold hands while they sleep so they can wake each other if the current changes.



Fireman giving a drink to a Koala.



Chimpanzee feeding milk to a 60-day old tiger cub.

Committee Chairman & Activities

Are you looking for something to do especially during this pandemic! Then please give our various committee chairman a call to get involved in a fun activity.

Golf - Danny Lauretta (209-586-4567). Our regular tournaments are typically the third Tuesday of the month. Please call me for specific information as to dates, times, and locations.

Bowling - Jerry Fountain (209) 532-0650).

Pinochle - Bob Morrison (209-588-0994). John White is playing pinochle at his home each Monday at 1pm. Call John at 408-355-5991 for additional details.

Car Club - Rich Rinaldi (209-532-8366).

Fishing - Chuck Simmons (209-532-9550). **RV Group** - Eddie Toews (209-532-3970).

Kayaking/Easy Hiking - Sol Robin (209-651-1054).

Presidential Elections

Not counting the 2020 election, there have been 58 presidential elections in the United States. Presidents are elected through the electoral college. When Americans cast their votes for president, they are in reality directing other people — called electors — to vote for the candidate who receives the most votes in their state. The political party of the winning candidate in each state then sends its preselected electors to the state capital to vote. This is the Electoral College, and its members elect the president and vice president of the United States. There are 538 electoral electors (435 for members of congress; 100 for members of the senate; and 3 for the District of Columbia). 48 states and the District of Columbia have a “winner take all” policy. It takes 270 electoral votes to win the Presidency. Some interesting facts about those elections.

The **1928** election pitted Republican Herbert Hoover against Democrat Al Smith. The Republicans were identified with the booming economy of the 1920s, whereas Smith, a Roman Catholic, suffered politically from anti-Catholic prejudice, his anti-prohibitionist stance, and the legacy of corruption of Tammany Hall with which he was associated.

Hoover won a landslide victory on pledges to continue the economic boom of the Coolidge years. Smith won the electoral votes only of the traditionally Democratic Southern United States and two New England States. Hoover even triumphed in Smith's home state of New York by a narrow margin. Hoover received 444 electoral votes to Smith 87.

The United States presidential election of **1932** took place as the effects of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression were being felt intensely across the country. President Herbert Hoover's popularity was falling as voters felt he was unable to reverse the economic collapse, or deal with prohibition. Franklin D. Roosevelt used what he called Hoover's failure to deal with these problems as a platform for his own election, promising reform in his policy called the New Deal. Roosevelt won by a landslide, and this "critical election" marked the collapse of the Fourth Party System or

Progressive Era. The voters soon were realigned into the Fifth Party System, dominated by Roosevelt's New Deal Coalition. Roosevelt received 472 electoral votes to Hoover's 59.

The United States presidential election of **1860** set the stage for the American Civil War. The nation had been divided throughout most of the 1850s on questions of states' rights and slavery in the territories. In 1860, this issue finally came to a head, fracturing the formerly dominant Democratic Party into Southern and Northern factions and bringing Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party to power without the support of a single Southern state.

Hardly more than a month following Lincoln's victory came declarations of secession by South Carolina and other states, which were rejected as illegal by the then-current President, James Buchanan and President-elect Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln received 180 electoral votes; John Breckenridge 72; John Bell 39; and Stephen Douglas 12.

The United States presidential election of **1789** was the first presidential election in the United States of America. The election took place following the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788. In this election, George Washington was elected for the first of his two terms as President of the United States, and John Adams became the first Vice President of the United States.

Before this election, the United States had no chief executive. Under the previous system—the Articles of Confederation—the national government was headed by the Confederation Congress, which had a ceremonial presiding officer and several executive departments, but no independent executive branch. Washington received 69 electoral votes, John Adams 34, and others 35.

Dues & Other Changes for 2020 and 2021

Eddie Toews, Treasurer, 209-532-3970 The Branch Executive Committee (BEC) has voted that the 2021 assessment for member dues will be discounted by 52% to \$12.00 per member. **This will be for the year 2021 only and will revert back to the \$25.00 dues per member in the 2022 assessment. Dues must be paid no later than March 9, 2021 to receive this discount** and should be mailed directly to Eddie Toews, 21795 El Coyote Dr., Sonora, CA 95370.

In addition to the dues adjustment for 2021, the first in-person meeting will be a “**Welcome Back Meeting and Luncheon**”. The BEC has voted to lower the luncheon price to \$8.00 per person. All other meals after the first in-person meeting will be at the regular price of \$15.00 per meal, unless the caterer changes the price of the meal. You must attend the first regular in person meeting to get this discount. This will not roll into any other meeting.

Recruit a new member! It is time to start thinking of bringing a friend, relative, or new acquaintance into SIRs. The BEC has decided that the \$25.00 new member application fee be waived for the rest of 2020 and through April 9, 2021. Any new members starting after that date, will be required to pay the 2021 annual dues of \$25 plus a \$10.00 badge fee when joining SIRs for a total of \$35. So get your friends before March 9, 2021 for a total of \$10.

Since the membership fee is waived for new members starting prior to April 9, 2021, the new member sponsor will not receive a free lunch when that person joins SIRs during this special limited offer.

Chaplains Corner

Chaplain - Steve Gregory (209-533-0309). This month long time member Joe Patania, #291, went to his eternal reward. He and his brother Nuncy will be greatly missed and are now together again.

Meet your Branch 136 Executive Committee



Big Sir
Gene
Zanoni
209-532-1989



Little Sir
Paul
Squeri
209-586-4083



Secretary
Bill
Burnes
209-533-4334



Asst. Secr.
Dick
Aberle
209-532-4066



Treasurer
Eddie "Ed"
Toews
209-532-3970



Asst. Treas.
Steve
Aldridge
209-770-5287



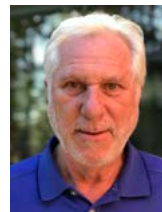
Director
Chris
Methot
408-218-5221



Director
Bill
Guenza
209-568-7088



Director
Marty
Martin
209-568-1886



Director
George
Cocomes
209-456-9814

Photo not Available

Director
Phil
Baylis
510-552-7596



Director
Tom
Neiderer
714-886-8574

Have Something to Share?

I'm always amazed at what comes across my email server from the members of our community, SIRS, family, and friends. This issue of the Bulletin includes many of those stories. If you have something you would like to share, please send it to me for inclusion in our monthly Bulletin. SIRS rules do apply, and not everything may be accepted. But send them anyway. johnwhitecpa@gmail.com

Branch 136 Branch Executive Committee**Big SIR:** Gene Zaroni 532-1989 genevzaroni@gmail.com**Little SIR:** Paul Squeri 586-4083 paulsqueri@yahoo.com**Sec:** Bill Burnes 533-4334 sonorabill401@gmail.com**Asst. Sec:** Dick Aberle 532-4066 raaberle2@sbcglobal.net**Treas:** Eddie 'Ed' Toews 532-3970 lcoinlady@aol.com**Asst. Treas:** Steve Aldridge 770-5287
stevealdr1147@gmail.com**DIRECTORS:** Bill Guenza 568-7088

Marty Martin 568-1886 George Cocores 456-9814

(2021) Rex Page (209) 533-4501 Chris Methot (408) 218-5221

(2021) Robert Morrison (209) 588-0994

Recent Past Big Sirs

Jim Botto - 2019

Paul Squeri - 2018

Danny Laureta - 2017

Dale Decker - 2016

Jim Johnson - 2015

Behind the Scenes

Branch Photographer - Steve Belochi 533-5315

Bulletin - John White 408-355-5991

Internet - Jerry Bellefeuille 533-3630

SIR item sales - Fred Kehr 785-4358

Sunshine Chaplain - Steve Gregory 533-0309

SIR State Officers[WWW.sirinc.org](http://www.sirinc.org)<https://sirinc.org/newsletters/>

President - Ed Benson

Vice-President - Jim Johnson

Secretary - Stuart Williams

Treasurer - Roy Hodgkinson

Region 2 Director - Rick Kindle

Area 5 Governor - Dale Decker

Branch 136**Honorary Life Members**

Jim Johnson

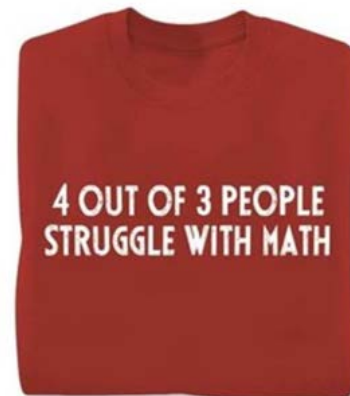
Frank Taylor

Al Limon

Branch 136 has a Website!

Please check out our branch website at <https://sonorasirs.org>. It's a great way to find out what has happened as well as what is going to happen.

I'm not turning my clock back on Sunday. The last thing we need is an extra hour of 2020!!!!



Do we have the right information on you?

We are in the process of updating our membership records. Sometimes we move, change our phone numbers, or email address and don't even think about letting others know of the change. So please go to our website at [www.https://sonorasirs.org/roster](https://sonorasirs.org/roster) to verify your information. Should there be a change, then please contact George Cocores directly at 209-456-9814 or greekbeak1@aol.com. If there are no changes to your membership information, then no action from you is required. To access the roster, you will need to input a password, the user name is "safety" and the password is "first"(all lower caps).

The “Common” Is Rarely So

As I get more and more involved in SIRS, it has come to my attention that what is “common knowledge” (or assumed to be so) is rarely the case. So I stumble through things, look things up, and ask a lot of questions. Mistakes are made and some egos may get hurt, but I learn and move on. So let me help you with with some information regarding SIRS that you may not have known, forgotten, or just need a refresher on.

The BEC. This stands for the “Branch Executive Committee” and it is the governing body for each SIRS branch. It is through the BEC in which matters are addressed and decisions are made. Each BEC meeting, and they are monthly, are open for all SIR members to attend; with the minutes for each meeting posted on the Branch website. Only BEC members are eligible to vote although anyone can attend a meeting.

HLM. This stands for “Honorary Life Member” (HLM) and is a very special recognition given to those members who “has performed exceptional service in the furtherance of the purposes and objectives of Sons In Retirement, Incorporated.” The HLM designation is limited according to SIR state regulations. Currently, we have three HLM’s - Jim Johnson (who is slated to be the 2021 SIR State President), Frank Taylor, and Al Limon. Al Limon has been a HLM for over ten years and has received the distinction as a “Senior Honorary Life Member.” So when you see these men, make sure to thank them for their invaluable past service.

Big Sir. The Big Sir is the Chief Operating Officer for each branch. The Big Sir directs all of the activities of the branch as well as ensures that all SIR policies and procedures are adhered to.

Little Sir. The Little Sir is the assistant to the Big Sir and is responsible for supporting the activities of the branch.

Propane. Most of us in Sonora use propane to heat our homes, etc. Our SIRS branch has a propane program that you may be interested in. Please contact Marty Martin for further details.

YOUTUBE November, it’s hard to think of November without thinking of *Thanksgiving*.

Thanksgiving was always a time when family from all over would come to our house for a visit and dinner. The dining and living room would be packed with people and place settings; and the house would smell of turkey, pie, and mashed potatoes. My mother and sisters would be busy in the kitchen preparing food and decorating the table; us men would be huddled around the TV set watching football and hoping my father would win his football bet; and of course friends, employees and others without a place to go were always welcomed for dinner. Yes it was a wonderful time to be home and be part of a family.

All you need to do is click on the link and then skip the commercials or copy the address to your browser. It’s just that easy. Nothing to download or sign up for.

Happy Birthday to You!

Both astrological signs Scorpio and Sagittarius fall within November and December. Scorpios (Oct 23 to Nov 21) are passionate, loyal, and brave. Your birth stone is the topaz, which symbolizes “calmness.” Sagittarius (Nov 22 to Dec 21) are honest, optimistic, and enthusiastic. November’s birth flower is the chrysanthemum, which symbolizes love. The original Roman calendar had only ten months, and November was the ninth month. (January and February hadn’t been added to the calendar yet!) November typically brings in the start of the cold winter months. *Novemberish*, means “dreary.” November is also known as the “blood month” - when animals were sacrificed for food in preparations for winter.

White, John	11/01
Shoemaker, James	11/01
Slowelier, Steve	11/03
Hurley, Tim	11/07
Sperry, Paul	11/10
Vigil, Fred	11/10
Bacon, Rick	11/13
Phillips, Willie	11/13
Hagel, James	11/17
Salmon, John	11/18
Cunningham, Hal	11/19
Aldridge, Steven	11/20
Milano, Richard	11/21
Jacques, Len	11/25
Hall, Tom	11/29
Davis, Gerry	11/30
Coe, Mike	11/30

(Editor’s apologies in advance if I over looked your special day.)

Message from the Editor

John White (408-355-5991). If you scanned the birthday list you should have noticed my name as first on the list! Yes, I was an “All Saints” baby. My mother went into labor late on Halloween night. My father was a professional entertainer and so it was quite common back in 1957 for him to get dressed up for Halloween. He went as a clown that night. When I was born my father showed up at the hospital (men weren’t allowed in the delivery room back then) wearing his clown outfit. So that explains a lot about my personality and outlook on life.

I grew up in a large family. In addition to Mom and Dad, I had four older sisters and a younger brother. We always celebrated birthdays with cake, candles, and presents. So even without friends and other family over for birthday celebrations, all of our gatherings were large. Dad would film the event with his 8mm camera, which we are so grateful for as we look back to when we were kids.

As I watch these old family movies of when I was about 6 or 7 years old, I see my younger brother standing beside me and looking earnestly at the presents I was opening and then bursting into tears when he saw something he wanted but I received. He would then immediately stop crying in anticipation of the next gift.

We had an artist come to the house for dinner one evening and he sketched all of us kids. That’s me at around age 2. What a handsome boy!



A Story of Courage and Unselfishness

“Greater love hath no man than this: to lay down one’s life for his friends.” So says the Bible. And, indeed, in almost every culture since the beginning of time, sacrificing your own life in order that others may live has been regarded as the ultimate act of courage and selflessness. Understandably, it’s an act only few people are ever willing to make. But, over the course of history, some remarkable people have done just this – they have given up their lives in the hope that other people will be able to carry on living.

What’s even more extraordinary and heroic than someone sacrificing their own life in order to save their friends and loved ones is when someone takes the ultimate step to save strangers. And yet, there have been numerous examples of this happening. Sometimes it’s been for reasons of patriotism or for national pride. Sometimes in order to further a cause greater than themselves. And sometimes it’s just been in order to save one single other soul.

Here is the story of the group of men known as the *The Chernobyl Three*.



On the morning of April 26, 1986, scientists got to work on a new series of tests in Unit 4 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in northern Ukraine. Soon after the tests began, things started going wrong. Very wrong. Two explosions rocked through the unit. Two unfortunate engineers were killed instantly. But that was just the start of the problem. More seriously, a fire had started in the light water graphite moderator reactor. Plumes of radioactive smoke were sent into the sky. A further 49 workers quickly fell ill and died over the next few weeks – often enduring slow, agonizing deaths.

The accident meant that more radioactive fallout was sent into the atmosphere than was caused by either of the nuclear bombs dropped on Japan at the end of the Second World War. The damage was massive. But it could have been so much worse. A second explosion could have caused the whole Chernobyl complex to go into full meltdown. Had this happened, experts estimate that nuclear fallout would have spread over half of Western Europe, killing untold numbers as well as destroying land and food crops. Tensions between the Western world and the Soviet Union might have also deteriorated significantly.

Thankfully, a second explosion was avoided, thanks to the three men who have gone down in history as ‘The Chernobyl Three’ – or, testament to their bravery, as the Chernobyl ‘Suicide Squad’. The story goes that, several weeks after the first explosion, the plant chiefs became seriously worried that radioactive material was traveling in a molten flow towards the huge pool of water under the reactor. If the two came into contact, it would have caused a second steam explosion, potentially destroying Chernobyl’s three other reactors. Someone needed to go into the pool and drain it.

According to most accounts, two plant workers and one soldier stepped forward to take on the job. Undoubtedly, the plant workers – and most likely the soldier, too – would have known that the basement of the reactor was highly radioactive. Even if they could get the job done quickly, they would still be exposed to lethally high doses. In short, it was a true suicide mission, and the Soviet authorities even assured the men that their families would be looked after financially.

"The men entered the basement in wetsuits, radioactive water up to their knees, in a corridor stuffed with myriad pipes and valves," it was like finding a needle in a haystack."

The men worried they wouldn't be able to find the valves.

"When the searchlight beam fell on a pipe, we were joyous," mechanical engineer Alexei Ananenko said in interview with the Soviet press, as quoted by Leatherbarrow. "The pipe led to the valves."

The men felt their way to the valve in the dark basement. "We heard a rush of water out of the tank, and in a few more minutes we were being embraced by the guys."

Some historians have tried to separate myth from reality. It’s been pointed out that all the men may well have been plant workers who were just unfortunate enough to be on shift at that time rather than actively volunteering for the work. The depth of the water in the cooling pool is also disputed. But what can’t be denied is that, in darkness and in treacherous conditions, the three men put concerns of their own safety to the back of their minds and, after much trying, finally found the correct valves to open and drain the pool.

Since the Soviet authorities were determined to downplay the Chernobyl “accident”, what happened to the three men is also a question of historical debate. It’s believed that none of them actually died in the immediate aftermath of their heroic actions. Even if they didn’t die of radioactive fallout – and many workers did – their heroism is by no means diminished. ***The three men stepped into the darkness beneath a molten radioactive core and put the good of humanity before their own safety.***

11...11...11

Today, most of our younger generation have no idea what that means. Do you? 11, 11, 11. It signaled the end of the Great War, the “War to End all Wars.” The eleventh month, the eleventh day, the 11 hour of 1918 that signaled the end of World War I, known as “Armistice Day.” In 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower officially changed the name from Armistice Day to “Veterans Day.”

Some interesting facts about Veterans Day...

- In 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill which changed Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. However, President Gerald Ford moved it back to November 11 due to the important nature of this historical event.
- Veterans Day commemorates veterans from all wars.
- Every Veterans Day and Memorial Day, Arlington National Cemetery holds an annual memorial service. The cemetery is home to the graves of over 400,000 people, most of whom served in the military.
- As of 2018, 18.2 million living veterans served in at least one war.
- 9% of all veterans are women.
- 7 million veterans served during Vietnam.
- Of the 16 million veterans who served in World War II, approximately 497,000 were still alive in 2018.
- 2 million veterans served during the Korean War.
- As of 2017, the top three states with the highest percentage of veterans were Alaska, Maine, and Montana, respectively.



World War I (WW1) also known as the First World War, was a global war centered in Europe that began on 28th July 1914 and lasted until 11th November 1918. The war lasted exactly four years, three months and 14 days. Before World War II began in 1939, World War I was called the Great War, the World War or the War to End all Wars. 135 countries took part in World War I, and more than 15 million people died.

The Americans joined World War 1 after 128 Americans were killed by a German submarine. In 1915, the British passenger ship Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine. In all, 1,195 passengers, including 128 Americans, lost their lives. Americans were outraged and put pressure on the U.S. government to enter the war. President Woodrow Wilson wanted a peaceful end to the war, but in 1917, when the Germans announced that their submarines would sink any ship that approached

Britain, Wilson declared that America would enter the war and restore peace to Europe. The United States entered the war on April 6, 1917.

8 million soldiers died in WW1 and 21 million were injured. 65 million troops were mobilized during the war. 58,000 British soldiers were lost on the first day at the Battle of the Somme. Chemical weapons were first used in World War I. The chemical was mustard gas.

The U.S. was in the war in actual combat for only seven and a half months during which time 116,000 were killed and 204,000 were wounded. In the Battle of Verdun in 1916, there were over a million casualties in ten months.

By 1918, German citizens were striking and demonstrating against the war. The British navy blocked German ports, which meant that thousands of Germans were starving and the economy was collapsing. Then the German navy suffered a major mutiny. After German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on November 9th, 1918, the leaders of both sides met at Compiegne, France. The peace armistice was signed on November 11th. By the end of the war four empires — the Russian empire, the Ottoman empire, the German empire, and the Austro-Hungarian empire had collapsed because of the war.

Today, World War I is a faint memory. When we traveled to England, Australia, and New Zealand, the significance of this event was evident when you visit the national memorials. In Australia and New Zealand for example, 80% of the qualified men served in the war. Of that amount 50% were either killed or wounded. Everyone knew someone who was involved in the conflict...a brother, a father, an uncle, a friend, a classmate. Since the battles were fought in Europe, none of the remains were ever brought back to their homeland. So if you lost someone dear to you, there were no funerals, no graves, you simply never saw them again.

Germany joined the League of Nations in 1926, but many Germans were very resentful of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany and Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933. Italy withdrew three years later. The League of Nations was unable to stop German, Italian, and Japanese from expanding their power and taking over smaller countries. Many believe World War I never really ended, and that World War II never would have happened if not for WWI.

On my first visit to Washington DC, I strolled through the Capitol Mall and in distant area I saw a white gazebo structure in much disrepair. I later found out it was the District of Columbia memorial to World War I. I thought, how very sad. Well, many other people felt likewise and the memorial has since been restored.



On November 9, 2017, The World War I Centennial Commission held a ceremonial groundbreaking event at Pershing Park, the site of a planned national memorial honoring those who served in World War I. On December 13, 2019, the \$35 million World War I Memorial received its construction permit and work will begin soon to reshape Washington's Pershing Park.