

‘Fight, fight, fight’ versus ‘unite’

At a historic moment, Trump faces a rhetorical choice in convention speech.

By Kevin Rector

When Jennifer Mercieca published a book four years ago titled “Demagogue for President: The Rhetorical Genius of Donald Trump,” some of her friends immediately questioned the title. “Genius?” they asked. “Really?”

Mercieca stood by it. She told her friends that, over her many years studying the former president, Trump’s ability to use words and images to promote himself and his agenda stood out again and again as exceptional.

That same skill set was the first thing that came to mind for Mercieca on Saturday, she said, when she watched Trump rise from a bloodied rally stage after being shot, pump his fist in the air and utter an instant political slogan: “Fight! Fight! Fight!”

“To me, that was a perfectly Trumpian moment,” Mercieca said. “He knows what the scene is. He’s a demagogue of the spectacle. He’s an authoritarian P.T. Barnum.”

In the days since the shooting, elected officials, pundits and other political observers have been focused intensely on political rhetoric and its power to incite violence.

President Biden said it’s time to “cool it down.” Trump said he’s writing a new message of unity into his planned speech for the Republican National Convention on Thursday. “UNITE AMERICA!” he [See Rhetoric, A7]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

MORE FROM THE GOP CONVENTION

Presidential nominee and former President Trump acknowledges delegates at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee on Tuesday. Scan this code to read our coverage at latimes.com and in our eNewspaper, where subscribers get an exclusive “LATEXtra.”



Before going MAGA, Vance made it big in San Francisco’s tech world

Trump’s running mate forged key connections as a venture capitalist

By Faith E. Pinho

The new Republican vice presidential nominee hangs his proverbial hat on hailing from Middletown, Ohio — a steel mill town in the heart of working-class America.

But for a few years, J.D. Vance joined the world of coastal elites, building a robust venture capitalist career and hobnobbing with some of the wealthiest tech leaders in the Bay Area.

Miles away from his Appalachian upbringing and long before he became former President Trump’s running mate, he was quietly building a Silicon Valley venture capital career and a life in San Francisco.



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

GOP vice presidential nominee J.D. Vance greets convention delegates in Milwaukee on Tuesday.

In an essay for the Atlantic in 2016, he contrasted that reality with conditions in his hometown:

“A few Saturdays ago, my wife and I spent the morning volunteering at a community garden in our San Francisco neighborhood. After a few hours of casual labor, we and the other volunteers dispersed to our respective destinations: tasty brunches, day trips to wine country, art-gallery tours. It was a perfectly normal day, by San Francisco standards.

“That very same Saturday, in the small Ohio town where I grew up, four people overdosed on heroin. A local police lieutenant coolly summarized the ba- [See Vance, A5]

Push for Supreme Court reforms could lead to term limits

Biden signals support for proposed change that some Republicans sought in recent years.

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — President Biden has told progressives in Congress that he will soon endorse proposals to reform the Supreme Court, including by putting term limits on the justices and enforcing an ethics code.

He also spoke in favor of a proposed constitutional amendment to overturn the immunity for presidents that the court’s conservative justices granted two weeks ago, according to media reports Wednesday.

But the president apparently remains opposed to expanding the court from nine to 13 justices.

If Democrats can win control of the House and Senate in the November election and Biden is re-elected, some or all of these legislative proposals could

move forward early next year. But polls suggest that outcome appears increasingly unlikely.

So for now, Biden’s proposed reforms remain largely political talking points for Democrats and progressives.

Nevertheless, court reform advocates welcomed Biden’s show of support.

“The court has long been the most powerful, least accountable part of our government, and you can’t ensure the long-term success of our democracy without implementing changes to our all-powerful and unaccountable juristocracy,” said Gabe Roth, executive director of Fix the Court, an advocacy group for court reform.

“The vast majority of the country, regardless of party, believes the justices should not serve for life, but ... should be subject to basic oversight like Congress and the executive [branch] are,” Roth said.

The idea of term limits has been popular with many Republicans over the last [See Court reform, A5]

Curtain falling on Ursula’s Costumes

After half a century, legendary designer, now 90, is forced to close her shop

By Stacy Perman



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

COSTUMER Ursula Boschet, foreground, watches as actor Kate Beckinsale, a frequent customer, looks through items at Ursula’s Costumes.

On a warm summer morning, Ursula Boschet, the iconic Hollywood costume designer, made her way through racks of clothing, brimming from floor to ceiling in the Santa Monica store and workshop that bears her name.

Ursula’s Costumes is a 6,000-square-foot treasure trove filled with a warren of smaller rooms stuffed with petticoats, flapper dresses, pirate outfits, gangsters’ pinstripe suits, nuns’ habits, western wear and Roman legion uniforms. Carmen Miranda head-dresses and various hats, military helmets and animal heads line shelves. There is an “animal room,” where their companion bodies reside, and a “period room” boasting historical costumes spanning from the 1100s to the 1700s.

One minute, the diminutive 90-year-old — who comes to the shop five days a week from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. — is hoisting a hook-topped stick to pull a shark’s [See Ursula’s, A9]

Heat wave could fuel fire threat

Weather experts expect another round of high temperatures to reach the West starting this weekend. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Power couple takes team stake

Willow Bay and Bob Iger agree to invest more than \$100 million in L.A.’s Angel City FC. **BUSINESS, A8**

Emmy nods are full of fresh faces

Indigenous actors break out as FX makes waves in the major categories. Netflix leads the count. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 87/65. **B6**



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