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PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE

IN A FIERCELY COMPETITIVE CAMPAIGN YEAR, SOUTH BAY VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZERS RELY ON GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERS TO GET THEIR CANDIDATES ELECTED. MEET FIVE TIRELESS WORKERS, EACH WITH AN ENTHUSIASTIC EYE ON NOVEMBER.

WRITTEN BY MICHELE GARBER PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARISA GUZMAN-ALOIA

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Patti and David were both recently elected as Central Committee Members for the 66th Assembly district.

David Hadley and Patti LaGrelus Rising Stars

Throughout his adult life, David Hadley has cared about and paid attention to politics, but his involvement was essentially on the periphery. As he describes it, "I've always been interested, in the sense that I think the issues are important and we're fortunate to live in a country where our input on everything from our voting to our participation matters."

But it wasn't until after the 2008 Democratic sweep of the White House and Congress that David decided it was time to become politically active. He started modestly by raising money for candidates, giving talks and blogging. After the 2010 elections, he was asked to become president of the Beach Cities Republicans (BCR), the largest grassroots Republican group in the area.

As BCR president, he oversees the organization's daily operations and volunteer initiatives and is involved at multiple levels, from hosting guest speakers and writing the monthly newsletter to precinct walking. In June, he took his political commitment to the next level and was elected as a Central Committee Member for the 66th Assembly district.

"I'm involved to help build the party and do the things that central committees and activists should do beyond individual candidate races, as they don't have the time horizon. We're working to build the big tent Republican coalition."

Like David, Patti LaGrelus was politically aware but not politically active. Yet in just in a few short years, she's gone from being a concerned citizen on the sidelines of the political arena to a fully engaged, grassroots, star player.

In 2010, impressed by assembly candidate Nathan Mintz, Patti volunteered on her first political campaign. Bit by the

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political bug, Patti got passionately involved on Craig Huey's congressional campaign, while also becoming a local precinct captain. She joined the Beach Cities Republicans and this June was elected as a Central Committee Member for the newly created 66th Assembly district, cementing her role in the South Bay's grassroots scene.

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"I'd seen how this wonderful state and nation are heading in the wrong direction and making changes that are for the worse," she says. "I don't want to just sit back and watch. I want to be involved and be part of making things happen."

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