

# The (Not-So) Secret Sauce of CAOC

By Kathryn Stebner



Their collective history spans 94 years. They are the best of friends. They have been together through deaths, marriages, have raised families, have dealt with aging parents, have had children, had health issues, and have raised all kinds of animals. They have shared breakups, heartbreaks, new love and joy. They have been together through the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. They are CAOC's not-so-secret ingredients: Nancy Drabble (Drabble), Nancy Peverini (Pev) and Lea-Ann Tratten (Lea-Ann).

They, along with the other women at CAOC, including Laurie Klimchuck (Klim), Samantha Farmer (Sam), Saveena Takhar (Saveena) and Jacquie Serna (Jax), just to name a few, are truly a force of nature.

For me, I have had the pleasure and honor of getting to know these amazing women, whom I have come to call the truest of friends.

So, dear members, what binds the three amigos and what shaped them?

Even today, Sacramento is not always the friendliest place for women, and it certainly did not start out that way. Women in our society have had to fight for relevancy and power with more force than did their male counterparts.

Thirty years or so ago, decisions in the Capitol were still being made behind the closed doors of wood-paneled, cigar-smoke-filled rooms. Women did not have the relevance or respect that they have always deserved, but are only now beginning to receive. Drabble and Pev were two of approximately four women

lobbyists, at a time when there was only one female Senator. To be blunt, politics was decidedly a man's game, and these amazing women have worked incredibly hard to break down this barrier. They did it slowly, methodically, one meeting at a time. And they did it together. They always had each other.

All three had parents who were political. All three came from close families. All three are mothers. All three love animals. All three love to have fun. And all three have hearts of gold and a moral compass that guides them at each turn.

Here is a little bit more about what makes these three CAOC's secret recipe.

Drabble's parents were a product of the depression. Her father was raised by a single mom. He was a supporter of FDR. Likewise, her mother was raised by her mom, who worked in a factory. Her parents met in a math class at UCLA and were together "quietly" political. Her mother was an academic yet broke with her own family to be with her father for love. Like her parents, Drabble went to UCLA and then off to Berkeley to attend law school at Cal. After graduation, she was immediately hired by the one and only Ralph Nader and was assigned to Congress Watch. In her own words, she was "dropped into the deep end of the pool," lobbying in the halls of the Capitol. She became a weekly commentator on CNN for a year. She met her husband John, a litigator on Nader's team, who argued cases before the US Supreme Court. Ultimately, wanting to move back to California, Drabble landed a job at CAOC and the rest, as they say, is history.

Pev's parents were both born and raised in the small farming town of Soledad, where she grew up. Her dad enlisted in World War 2 at age 18, served in the South Pacific, and came back to marry her mom, who was then 18. Pev's father never graduated from high school, and started pumping gas at a Soledad gas station, bought the station, and then turned it into Soledad Tire and Wheel. Her parents instilled a strong work ethic in all of their children, which is why Pev started answering phones for the business when she was 13 and waitressing at 14. True to form, Pev's family were dedicated to each other and had compassion for those less fortunate. Her Dad was and is her hero. He went from a little Italian kid who was bullied in school because he didn't know English to a respected member of the community, even serving as Soledad's Mayor for 12 years. Pev has defined herself by working with and for people who have had tragedies in their lives, have faced discrimination, or some other type of injustice. She joined CAOC to help make policy change so that going forward, changes in the law will improve lives.

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