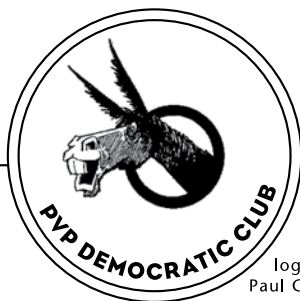


Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

Founded 1952



May 2011 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274

Visit Us on the Web at www.pvpdemocrats.org

"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

COMING EVENTS

MAY MEETING:

DAY AND TIME: Sunday, April, 15,
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Pacific Unitarian Church,
5621 Montemalaga Drive, RPV

PROGRAM: Assault on Women's Rights

JUNE MEETING:

SAVE THE DATE: New Time: Thursday,
June 23, 7-9 PM

LOCATION: Pacific Unitarian Church

PROGRAM: Annenberg Project at
Lower Point Vicente

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May 2011 Meeting: May Meeting Looks at Right-Wing Threats to Women's Rights

Some are calling it a "war on women," a legislative assault on laws protecting reproductive rights and women's healthcare ever since Republicans took control of Congress.

MoveOn.org calls it a "rampage attacking women's health and rights," including "Redefining rape. Attacking the right to choose. Belittling victims of violence."

At this month's meeting, we will take a look at what feels to many like an effort to turn back the clock on women's rights. We'll meet Sunday, May 15, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Drive in RPV.

We'll also elect the club's new board of directors. Please see separate article in this newsletter for details.

Among pending bills in Congress is one that would impose tax penalties on families and businesses whose private insurance covers abortion care.

Another bill protects healthcare providers who decline training to provide abortion care or even to make referrals. According to Terry O'Neill, president of the National Organization for Women, "This bill gives our government's 'blessing' to any emergency room that would let a pregnant woman die rather than perform an abortion procedure that could save her life."

These right-wing efforts also were woven into the recent federal budget dispute

which, among other things, threatened the future of Planned Parenthood and in the end, cut millions of dollars in funding for the federal health and nutrition program for women and children known as WIC.

But the movement goes beyond the federal government.

The Guttmacher Institute, a research and public policy center working to advance sexual and reproductive health in the United States, recently reported that more than 900 measures related to reproductive health and rights had been introduced in state legislatures by the end of March.

"As a whole, the proposals introduced this year are more hostile to abortion rights than in the past: Fifty-six percent of the bills introduced so far this year seek to restrict abortion access, compared with 38 percent in 2010," the report said.

Our panel of speakers will take a look at these actions and more and discuss the future of women's rights in our country.

Among our speakers:

- Dinah Stephens, public affairs manager for Planned Parenthood in Los Angeles, an organization that has become a symbol of the Congressional battle over a woman's right to choose.

- Carmen Schaye, national secretary of the National Women's Political Caucus and president of the NWPC's South Bay chapter.

Please join us to learn more about this timely topic.

April Meeting Report

By Ruth McGrew

Our April meeting featured three speakers, each talking about a different aspect of the problem of gun violence.



Billie Weiss, founder of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles

Billie Weiss, who is the associate director of the Southern California Injury Prevention Center at UCLA and founder of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles, told us that when guns are kept in the home as a "protective measure", they are more likely to be used for suicide than as a protection against intruders. Small children in the home are more likely to be killed by guns than older children because they have the strength to pull the trigger of a gun before they have the knowledge of the consequences. She said that nationally 50% of all gun deaths are a result of suicides.



Suzanne Verge, president of Los Angeles Chapter of the Brady Campaign to End Gun Violence and Sheri Barnett, local resident and former president of Women Against Gun Violence

The second speaker, Suzanne Verge, President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, discussed "openly carried guns" versus



Paul Nussbaum, son of club member Gloria Nussbaum and gunshot victim speaks about his life

"concealed guns". A permit is required to carry a concealed gun, but no permit is required if the gun is carried in plain sight. About 80 people per day are killed throughout the U.S. by guns.

Sheri Barnett, a Palos Verdes realtor and resident and former activist and president with Women Against Gun Violence, told about the murder of her son, Tony, who was 25 years old at the time and who was mentally ill. She emphasized that easy access to guns causes lots of deaths.

The speakers told of pending California legislation that would ban the open carry of a gun (AB 144). Additionally, Jennifer Zivkovic, District Director for State Sen. Ted Lieu, attended the meeting and reported the senator is sponsoring SB 661, which would expand California's gun free school zone from 1,000 feet to 1,500 feet.

During the question and answer session a great deal of information was given. It was brought out that the National Rifle Association puts up lots of money to fight gun regulations. (<http://www.vpc.org/studies/bloodmoney.pdf>)

The anti gun violence advocates want safety locks required on guns so children are less likely to use the guns. They also want to get rid of the "open carry law" and require that a permit be required whenever any gun is carried, whether it is carried openly or concealed. A gun in the home is much more likely to be used against a family member than against an intruder. There is no indication on a gun as to whether it is loaded or not. The state of California has pretty

good gun regulation laws, but nationally the laws are very weak. Gun manufacturers cannot be sued when guns are misused. The culture of guns is changing and will continue to do so; therefore guns will probably be more strongly regulated in the future.

Paul Nussbaum, a local resident, spoke of his experience of being shot in 1987. He was driving on the freeway when a car drove up alongside his car and shot him. Paul has suffered from paralyses ever since that incident. The man doing the shooting mistook Paul as a driver who had cut him off a few blocks back. He said the man was very angry, and pointed out that anger is usually destructive and we need to study how to resolve anger peacefully.

In keeping with our language-framing project, there was a discussion about how to frame the gun violence debate. It was brought out that when talking about guns we should not talk of "gun control", which is offensive to some people, but of "gun safety rules".

2011-'12 Membership Drive

By Lynn McLeod, Membership Chair

Our club has an exciting year ahead with important challenges to be met in order to move our country toward the political, economic, community and human goals we share.

The club will have an enthusiastic new board and plans for a series of well-informed and influential speakers on a wide range of topics – environment, local government, state budget and legislation, health, education, public services and others.

Of course we will be working to elect Democratic candidates to offices in 2012 and beyond.

We hope you will stick with us for all of these worthwhile activities, not to mention for the company of the many good people who are our members. The time is now to renew your membership and stay involved.

Individual memberships are now \$25 and family memberships are \$40 (you will note the change on the membership

continued from page 2

form on page 4 of this newsletter). An important tenet of the Democratic Party is to be inclusive to all. In that spirit, our club will never turn anyone away who cannot afford the annual dues. If you fall into that category, please contact me at lynn.mcleod@cox.net or mail in your membership form noting your situation.

Please take this opportunity to complete the membership information form on the last page of this newsletter and send it with your check to the address on the form. If it's more convenient for you, you are also welcome to bring your check to the next meeting.

Thank you for helping us build a meaningful voice for good government at all levels.

Member Commentary: Efforts Underway to Reduce the Death Penalty in L.A. County by Kay Cooperman Jue

I am against the death penalty. I consider it immoral, barbaric and ineffective in achieving its stated purpose – to deter the ultimate crime of murder.

I believe life in prison without possibility of parole is the correct alternative disposition for society's most heinous criminals.

So I was happy to learn about a new effort underway in L.A. and three other counties in California to at least reduce the frequency of death-sentence cases in our criminal courts.

The local effort is led by the L.A. County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives, a joint project of the ACLU and Death Penalty Focus. As a place to begin, the coalition is working to encourage L.A. County District Attorney Steve Cooley to cut back the number of cases in which his office seeks the death penalty. Toward that end, the coalition has written a resolution addressed to Cooley and has spent the last year or so seeking endorsement of the resolution by various community organizations.

Coalition coordinator James Clark says there are counties in California in which local district attorneys already have chosen to not seek the death penalty in capital cases. Los Angeles County, on the other hand, is the state leader in the number of death-penalty cases filed each

year. In fact, in 2009, it was the national leader with 13 new cases filed. Last year, the number of new death-penalty cases filed in L.A. County – 8 – matched the number filed in the entire state of Texas.

The coalition wants "to pressure the D.A. to reduce the number of death penalty cases in Los Angeles County so the money that will be saved can be used for other public services, like healthcare and education," Clark said.

Each death penalty case costs a county \$1 million more to prosecute than does a case seeking a maximum sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole, Clark said. That's just the added costs of taking a death penalty case to trial. That doesn't figure in the thousands of dollars involved in the appellate process mandated by California law when a criminal is sentenced to death.

"Life without the possibility of parole is a severe sentence and it ensures swift and certain justice," Clark said, "because a death sentence takes 25 years to carry out -- if it gets carried out at all. It creates uncertainty for the victim's family members; it becomes a traumatic process for them."

A life sentence without parole is carried out immediately once the trial is done, Clark said.

So far about 25 community organizations have endorsed the coalition's resolution that ultimately will be presented to District Attorney Cooley. Coalition members also are lobbying elected officials throughout the county, especially focusing on city council members.

I'm happy that the California Democratic Party added a plank in its platform last year supporting "permanent incarceration" as a replacement for the death penalty, which is

estimated to save the state \$1 billion through 2015.

If you are interested in learning more about the coalition's work, or to volunteer to help, visit its Web site at www.EndDeathPenaltyLA.org. I'm hoping we can explore this topic at a future club meeting.

Come Elect Your New Board

This month, the club will elect a new board of directors for the coming year.

Last year, the membership voted to switch from a fiscal year running from January to December to a July-to-June year. That makes May our election month.

The following slate of candidates will be put to a membership vote during our May 15 meeting:

President: Connie Sullivan
 First Vice President: Hans Grellmann
 Second Vice President: Jean McDonald, Adrian Tatum (shared)
 Recording Secretary: Jerry Parker
 Corresponding Secretary:
 Sheila Papayans
 Treasurer: Shuja Oberoi

Thanks to our Nominating Committee, Barbara Epstein, Ruth McGrew and Carol Moeller, for its work putting this slate together.

Come show your support by casting your vote during our May meeting. And save the date – July 17 -- for the club's annual meeting and potluck, where we'll install our new board.

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Founded 1952

Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

Founded in 1952 - One of the oldest and largest Democratic Clubs in California

As a member of
the PVP
Democratic Club,
you can:

- Meet other Democrats
- Meet and get to know your elected officials, raise funds and work for candidates
- Attend special events and monthly meetings
- Hear speakers and discuss issues of local, state and national import

Please Send your membership form to P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. Ca 90274

Name _____ I am a registered Democrat
Name* _____ I am a registered Democrat

* Fill in if Applying as a Family - two memberships

Residence Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ Zip _____ Cell _____

Mailing Address _____

(If different from residence)

City _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

*Select One: Individual: \$ 25.00/Year Family Membership \$40.00/Year
 Young Adult \$10.00/Year

Amount enclosed _____ Renewal New Member

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 Voter Registration Campaign Work Website/Facebook Phone Tree
 I might offer my home for a meeting or social event