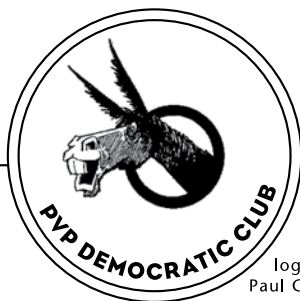


Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

September 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

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

TIME: Sunday, September 18, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library, 701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

PROGRAM: Politics and Elections

OCTOBER MEETING:

DATE: Sunday, October 16, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: To be announced next month

PROGRAM: Robert Greenwald of Brave New Films

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September 18, 2011 Meeting: Politics and November Elections

We are Democrats, after all, and we are passionate about politics and elections. Our September meeting responds to those twin passions.

On Sunday, September 18, in the community room of the Peninsula Center Library, starting at 2:30 p.m. we will hear from Mary Ellen Early, of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee. She will provide an insider's update on the new California political districts, with an emphasis on what redistricting will mean for the South Bay. Did the Citizens Redistricting Commission achieve its goals? Will the new districts lead to the election of more moderate candidates? Will legislative obstructionism be a thing of the past? Will Democrats be able to elect a 2/3 majority in both houses of the legislature in 2012? Is this too much to hope for?

Following Mary Ellen, we will hear from Rochelle Schneider, chair of the California Democratic Party's 53rd Assembly District who is leading the effort to reform the party's new 66th Assembly District organization, which will be our new district. Rochelle will explain how we fit into this new structure and how we might get involved.

Finally, we'll hear from Democratic candidates for local office. The PVPUSD board has one seat in contention, the PV Library District has three seats to fill, and Rancho Palos Verdes city council has three open seats. As of this printing, four of the five Democrats running for the three RPV city council seats have committed to speaking to our membership. This is shaping up to be a

very interesting race, as RPV always has so many lively issues going on.

Please come and listen to these candidates tell you about themselves and their vision for RPV and be sure to bring your questions for them. They will have plenty of time to answer any and all questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, September 18 for this political extravaganza!

August Meeting Report By Christine Mei

Club Business

Club President Connie Sullivan called the meeting to order and introduced the board members who were attending the meeting. She encouraged the club members to fill out the application for the Permanent Vote by Mail form to ensure a greater Democratic voter turnout in future elections.

Connie announced several upcoming events:

A) A planning session for the newly formed 66th Assembly District on Wednesday, August 31 @ 7 PM at the Sizzler on Sepulveda Blvd. The 66th Assembly District combines RPV with Torrance, the beach cities and possibly Lomita.

B) A voter registration event on Thursday, August 25 to encourage new citizens to register as Democrats.

C) The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner on Saturday, August 27. Cost is \$95 per person. Visit laccdp.org for more information.

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We then heard from two candidates who are running for the RPV City Council. Eric Alegria talked about his background and his priorities: open space, representation of young families and small businesses, fiscal responsibility, and government transparency. He said he is running for city council to be an active participant of our democracy.



Eric Alegria, candidate for RPV City Council



Jim Knight, candidate for RPV City Council

Jim Knight, a planning commissioner for eight years, wants to protect the open space and promote neighborhood compatibility. He developed the RPV Green Building Program and received commendations from the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and Senator Betty Karnette. He is running for city council to bring his long history of experience and leadership to preserve the quality of life for the city.

California Innocence Project



Justin Brooks, Director of the California Innocence Project

Justin Brooks, professor at California Western School of Law, founded the California Innocence Project in 1999 to seek the release of wrongfully convicted inmates.

Mr. Brooks started his presentation by telling us that the number one reason for people to be wrongfully incarcerated is mistaken identification, especially with cross-racial identification. Mistaken identification happens most frequently when the witness has to identify someone outside of his or her own race. This is not due to racism but instead due to lack of exposure. Other reasons for mistaken identification include: the way photos are presented to the eye-witness, the arbitrary inclusion of people off the street in the police line-up, and the "gang books" compiled by police that contain photos of young people believed to be affiliated with gangs.

Mr. Brooks then went on to say that the race of the victim and the competency of the defense attorney are the number one and number two reasons, respectively, for putting people on death row. If the victim of a capital crime is white, the person convicted of the crime tends to get the death penalty, regardless of his or her race. This is especially true if the victim is a white female.

With regards to incompetent defense

attorneys, Mr. Brooks recalled the first case he got involved with, in which a 21-year-old Puerto Rican girl was sentenced to death on a guilty plea. The defense attorney had never handled a case like this before and did not do any investigation, go to the crime scene, nor sit down with the prosecutor to negotiate a plea. Mr. Brooks was able to reverse the verdict for the girl after she was on death row for many years. It was because of this case that he quit his job in Michigan and started the California Innocence Project.

Mr. Brooks then discussed several cases that the California Innocence Project has worked on: a janitor convicted of robbery; a man accused of child-molestation; and a man who spent 12 years in prison for the murder his father committed. In another case, a 17-year-old boy from Venice Beach was convicted of murder solely based on the testimony of a crack-addicted prostitute. He was 40 when he finally got out of jail.

Although the verdicts for all of these cases were reversed, sometimes the damage done is irreversible. Some of Mr. Brooks' clients suffer from facial disorders, constant panic attacks, and inability to interact with others. Some of the wrongfully convicted receive financial compensation, but not in every case. This is because it is extremely costly to go through the compensation hearing, and a lawsuit against the state is incredibly difficult to win because state employees such as judges, police, and prosecutors have immunity.

Club members asked about Mr. Brooks' view of the death penalty. Not only does he oppose the death penalty on moral grounds, but he also does not believe our judicial system is competent enough to handle death penalty cases. Moreover, the death penalty is fiscally irresponsible because it costs taxpayers \$2 million per death row inmate. Finally, Mr. Brooks said the United States is lagging behind the rest of the developed world in terms of continuing to enforce the death penalty, and the handful of prosecutions we do every year hurts our reputation internationally.

The California Innocence Project is a law firm within California Western School of Law. Mr. Brooks has 10 lawyers and 40 to 50 students assisting him. They handle 10 to 20 cases a year out of 1000 to 2000 requests. Although they have enough resources to handle the litigation

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side, they need money to do investigations, including paying for photo copies, gas bills, and plane tickets or hotel reservations for experts who volunteer their time to testify in court, etc. They have to raise money for these expenses.

Mr. Brooks encouraged people to either make donations online at www.californiainnocenceproject.org or to send a check to the California Innocence Project, 225 Cedar Street, San Diego, CA 92101. The donation is tax deductible and will not be used for corporate salary. All donations are used to fund case expenses.

Global Warming - Hoax or Danger ?

By Hans Grellmann

This is one in a series of articles, presenting the progressive message ala George Lakoff.

Republicans in Congress call the idea of human-induced global warming a hoax. They claim that those scientists warning us of serious changes in the earth's climate as a result of human action are part of a conspiracy. Just what is it that this "conspiracy" would be trying to accomplish? And what's in it for the scientists that would cause them to want to lie to us?

Conservatives claim that the scientists who do climate research have invented this crisis so that they can have jobs. This supposition is just not credible when you consider the number and caliber of scientists who are involved. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which has been issuing reports warning us of global warming for years, includes members from 194 countries and thousands of scientists who contribute on a voluntary basis. All these thousands of people supposedly are part of a huge conspiracy? That's just not credible.

Let's consider a more likely conspiracy. A relatively small number of Republican Congressmen and Senators deny the scientific evidence of human-induced global warming and vigorously fight any government action to reduce the risk of severe climate disruption. They receive political contributions from the fossil fuel industries. These industries make a lot of money from the production and sale of coal, oil and natural gas. Switching from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy

clearly would threaten their bottom line! Republicans and the fossil fuel industry form a much more credible conspiracy with a clear motive.

Phone Tree Chair

Our club is seeking a phone tree chairperson to be responsible for calling or assigning others to make reminder calls to our members who do not have Internet access. The members that have Internet access receive meeting reminders by email. The number of club members requiring a phone call is around 30.

Please contact Connie Sullivan, 310-378-1554 or pvedems@gmail.com to volunteer.

Conservatives are strong believers in the "free market". They oppose any "interference" with the market. Unless, of course, that interference takes the form of huge subsidies for the oil industry. Providing incentives for the development of green energy, on the other hand, is unacceptable interference! People like that are called hypocrites.

Conservatives also believe that government should not interfere with our personal freedom. Like the freedom to pollute and treat the atmosphere as our sewer. But don't we also, as individuals and as a nation, have a responsibility to do no harm? Shouldn't we be concerned, that if we don't change our ways, we will leave a less hospitable and more dangerous world for our children?

Some framing ideas: Global warming is not an effective frame if we want people to change

their behavior. Warming tends to sound positive and pleasant. Climate Change is a completely neutral frame that elicits neither a positive or a negative emotional response. The term used by Al Gore in An Inconvenient Truth was closer to the mark. He used the frame Climate Crisis. That is what we should be calling the coming worsening of the climate. Because it will be a crisis of historic proportions.

PVP Club Member Honored

On August 27, the Los Angeles County Democratic Party held their annual Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt event. This event is held to honor the Democrats of the Year from each Assembly District and for the county as a whole. This year's Democratic Woman of the Year from the 53rd Assembly District is PVP Democratic club member Anne P. Faass. Anne is both a member of our club and of the Beach Cities Democrats. She has served as our club Secretary and Vice President and maintains membership in our club to this day. She also has been a delegate to the State Convention.

Anne became active through volunteer work for Planned Parenthood and through working on campaigns for pro-choice candidates. She is a retired systems analyst who has been married for 48 years and has two sons.

Congratulations Anne! You make us proud.

Budget Brief

By Connie Sullivan

The PVPDC board decided to donate \$50.00 to the LA County Democratic Party's booth at the County Fair in Pomona. The volunteers at the booth register new Democratic voters and promote Democratic values to fair-goers.

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Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club
 Founded 1952

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

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

Please contact me to help in the following areas:

- Hospitality Newsletter Membership Publicity Correspondence
 Voter Registration Campaign Work Website/Facebook Phone Tree
 I might offer my home for a meeting or social event