

# Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

Founded 1952



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Paul Conrad

## August 2009 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274  
Visit Us on the Web at [www.pvpdemocrats.org](http://www.pvpdemocrats.org)  
"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

### COMING EVENTS

#### AUGUST MEETING:

Save the date!  
Sunday, Aug. 16, 2:30-5 p.m.  
Peninsula Center Library

**PROGRAM:** Popcorn & Politics: A discussion on health-care reform, with videos.

#### SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Program TBA  
September 20, 2:30-5 p.m.  
Peninsula Center Library

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### Popcorn & Politics at Our August Meeting By Barbara Dye

This month's meeting will focus on the critical issue of health care reform. It will be held at the Peninsula Center Library's Community Room beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 16. Several recent thought-provoking videos about the issues that face the nation in the area of health insurance reform will be shown, and popcorn will be provided for munching just like the big time movie theaters. There will be time for a provocative discussion about where the nation is headed in terms of health care following videos.

"Health, Money and Fear," was produced by an emergency room doctor because of his dismay over the current system. His website, [ourailinghealthcare.com](http://ourailinghealthcare.com), describes the film as follows:

"Our Health Care System is beyond broken or sick. It's dumb. We spend more than twice as much per capita than most developed countries, the taxpayer is already paying for 60% of the total bill, and, by any measure of public health, our results are poor. Driven by technology and fear of liability, physicians order tests and treatments without regard for cost. Patients and families embrace unreasonable expectations. Drug companies successfully market expensive drugs that, at best, are marginally more effective than less expensive, older ones. As our primary care providers continue to disappear, increasing fragmentation of care, costs will rise and outcomes will worsen. Most significantly, the insurance industry adds nothing to 'health' and greatly to total cost, which is increasingly a burden to our economy and threat to the financial solvency of our government. What's more, our State government has to divert money to health

care from education, infrastructure and protecting the environment, all of which may have more impact on the health of our society than access to a doctor."

We also will view at least three very funny short videos from YouTube, all of which make real points about our health care system, featuring tunes like: "The Singing Doctors in Damaged Care," "Go Ahead and Die," and "If Life Were a Musical – the Waiting Room." Attendees can count on being informed and amused and will have the opportunity to enjoy a lively discussion about health care reform and how local activists can make a difference. Please plan to come.



Ron Smith of West Basin Municipal Water District

### July Meeting Report

By Darlene Loiler

At the July 19th meeting, Ron Smith from the West Basin Municipal Water District spoke to us about our local sources of water. He reminded us that all water on the planet is recycled and that though the planet is 70% water, only a small amount of that water is drinkable. We humans are 75% water and can only survive 3-8 days without water. He said that Southern CA is the most distorted water use area on earth. Without imported water

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Miguel Luna from the Urban Semillas at the July Meeting

our area could revert to semi-desert. The CA water system is one of the few things that astronauts can see from space. This infrastructure was designed for 18 million people and now serves 48 million. It is also old and in much need of both upgrades and repairs.

California is also in jeopardy of climate changes. Most of our water comes from No CA snow packs that have been growing thinner each year. So CA competes for this water with farmers in the big valley. 75% of CA's water is in the north while 75% of the people live in the south. Other water comes from the Colorado River where drought affected states are fighting for each drop. 2/3rds of our water in this district is now imported and 1/3rd is recycled. The Basin Municipal Water District goal is to recycle 2/3rds and import only 1/3rd.

Miguel Luna from the Urban Semillas and So CA Watershed Alliance spoke to us next about environmental justice. They work on the long-term health of our ecosystem. They also educate youths about water use and the need to recycle water. He said that 150,000 Californians live without clean water. Tulare where crystal clear water flows through to other cities, has brown, unsafe water for its own residents. AB 1242 amends the water code to make sure that everyone in our state has access to clean water. It is out of committee and headed for appropriations.

Our third speaker, Conner Everts, the executive director of the So CA Water Alliance spoke about water myths. One myth is that we in So CA will always need to import more water. Our population is now declining, and though more of our population has moved to desert areas, we are learning how to do more with less water. Californians now use an average of 225 gallons per person per day. The rest of the world uses far less per person. Agriculture uses 80%, much of that unmetered.

Farmers who have installed meters have found them very useful. Another myth is that bottled water is good for us. Bottled water is not tested for purity and is very expensive, \$1,000,000 per acre foot. The plastic bottles also cause pollution in their production, distribution and disposal.



Conner Everts, executive director of the So Cal Watershed Alliance

Many cities are beginning to use brown water for watering lawns, etc. They also are expanding their ability to catch rainwater. Arizona allows citizens to buy equipment to catch and use rainfall on their own houses. That is illegal in CA. Santa Monica now has a system that prevents waste and keeps the ocean safer. Long Beach is a model on how to go after water wasters. They have mandatory conservation. Los Angeles has a voluntary plan that lags way behind. Conserving is preferable to desalination. The latter is very expensive in money and energy.

### Countdown for Kyoto Follow-on

by Hans Grellmann

In 1997, in Kyoto, Japan, the Kyoto Protocol established a binding commitment for the reduction of greenhouse gases. Industrialized countries agreed to reduce their emissions by 5% below the level in 1990. The reduction was targeted to occur by 2012. As the next step, representatives from the world's nations will gather in Copenhagen at the United Nations Climate

Change Conference in December 2009. They will work towards an agreement to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2012.

One of the organizations working to raise awareness of how critical it is to take climate action before the Copenhagen conferences is called "The 350.Org". The 350 in the name stands for the CO2 level in the atmosphere, in parts per million (PPM), which must not be exceeded in the long term to prevent climate effects harmful to life on our planet. The limit was proposed by Dr. James Hansen of NASA. You can find information on the 350 PPM limit as well as Hansen's paper at [www.350.org/understanding-350](http://www.350.org/understanding-350).

350.Org is planning an International Day of Climate Action on October 24. The plan is to have worldwide events similar in scope to earth day. It is hoped that the news media will cover these events and thereby spread the message.

Our own South Bay will be taking part on October 24. The Environmental Protection Network (EPN) is taking the lead in planning a big event on South Bay beaches, possibly by forming a human chain to illustrate the new high tide line if global warming is not limited. Our club will participate. Look for updates in this newsletter.

If you are concerned about global warming, [www.350.org](http://www.350.org) is an excellent source for information. EPN is the way to get involved locally.

### State Party to Conduct Political Campaign Training

By Kay Cooperman Jue

The state Democratic Party, under the leadership of newly elected chair John Burton, really seems to be dedicated to the grassroots of the party. To that

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end, the party is announcing a series of training programs at various locations around the state called "Learn to Win 2010." Each session is two days long, held over a weekend, and is designed to help Democrats be more effective as political campaign volunteers.

Among the topics to be covered by party experts are campaign field skills, online strategy, campaign finance law and campaign messaging.

This is a great learning opportunity for all of us. Unfortunately, the two closest sessions to PV are pretty far away. One will be held in Santa Clarita on Jan. 9 and 10 of next year and another will be held in Irvine on April 10 and 11. Those interested should go to the party's Web page and register. The address is [www.cadem.org](http://www.cadem.org). Click on "Get involved" on the left side of the page and then click on "trainings." And please let me know if you're interested in attending. I can be contacted at [pvedem@yahoo.com](mailto:pvedem@yahoo.com)

### **The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan - Book Reviewed by Carol Moeller**

This book, written by journalist and UC Berkeley English professor Michael Pollan, explores some of the problems associated with our food. "Industrial food" began with our country's excess ammonium nitrate left over from WWII munitions production. This chemical can also be used for fertilizer, so this gift from Uncle Sam eliminated the farmer's need for the previous "pastoral farming" practices that relied on animal and plant rotations, where waste from grazing animals returned to the soil most of the nutrients removed by plant growth. The animals that were no longer needed to provide fertilizer in these industrial (now primarily corn) farms were then squeezed into feedlots, where they are now fed the chemically-fertilized and pesticide-sprayed corn grown on these industrial farms. One unsolved issue is the feedlot waste products from hundreds of thousands of animals contained in small spaces; contamination of rivers is a continuing problem, not to mention the ethical conundrum of providing what can only be termed horrible lives lived by these animals. Another problem is that cows are actually grass eaters, so their health is affected by being force-fed corn. The spread of diseases due to unsanitary, close

quarters is an additional quandary. These last two continuing problems have been addressed primarily by the pharmaceutical industry, with harmful microbes becoming ever more resistant.

Since animals cannot consume all the corn grown on highly subsidized industrial farms, it has become very cheap, so we find corn in a large majority of our processed foods. High fructose corn syrup is in nearly every product that previously contained sugar, while other corn products have replaced many more costly ingredients. As omnivores, we are genetically programmed to eat a variety of foods, but those who eat primarily processed "industrial foods" are in essence eating mostly one protein-poor food-- corn. This single-source food consumption has heavily contributed to the US obesity epidemic.

Although eating organic is definitely a step up, "big organic" companies sometimes house animals in feedlots while feeding them organically grown corn, and they sometimes use organically-grown corn products in lieu of more costly products in their fast foods. Pollan suggests we carefully research the source of our food to purchase grass-fed, free-range animal products and fresh organic fruits and vegetables, preferably locally grown. He also encourages activism to stop our government from giving taxpayer dollars to underwrite these unhealthy, unethical and environmentally unfriendly practices.

### **Profiles in Courage**

**By John F. Kennedy—Comments by Ruth McGrew**

Probably 90% of our club members are familiar with this book, written many years ago, but as I was looking through it the other day I found some very helpful and thought provoking information in the first section, called "Courage and Politics". Kennedy was pointing out that we all become discouraged when our Senators don't stand up strongly enough for what we feel we have elected them to do. He went on to explain that there are many forces pulling them in many different directions. It helped me to understand the complexities of being a "good" Congressional member.

He pointed out that each elected official is trying to represent many different viewpoints. The elected official also has many different loyalties to satisfy. These

loyalties are to their constituents, to their party, and to their own beliefs. Quite often those loyalties are in conflict with one another and the representative wants to satisfy each of them, which is not always possible.

After reading this particular section I felt I had a greater understanding of the difficulties of being an elected official, and could be more tolerant of their lack of a consistent voting record. I suggest that when you become discouraged it might help to read this first section, *Courage and Politics*, of the book *Profiles in Courage*.

### **Please Respond to the Questionnaire**

The PVP Dem. Club is trying to discover the most popular times and places to hold our monthly meetings. Last month we sent out a questionnaire asking your opinions, but unfortunately only five people responded. Does that mean that only five people "give a hoot" about where and when we hold the meetings? We certainly hope that isn't the case, so we are giving you another chance this month.

For those of you receiving the newsletter by e-mail the questionnaire will be sent by and can be returned by e-mail. For those who have a copy of the newsletter sent by postal mail, the questionnaire will be included and can be mailed back.

Each person's opinion is important, so **please respond.**

**Ruth McGrew, Newsletter Editor**

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Founded 1952



P.O. Box 2234,  
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# Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

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

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*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 - 2 memberships)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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**\*Select One: Individual: \$ 20.00/Year ( ) \* Family Membership \$30.00/Year ( )**

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**I might be interested in helping in the following areas:**

Hospitality  Newsletter  Membership  Refreshments  Publicity

Correspondence  Voter Registration  Campaign Work  Website

I might offer my home for a meeting or social event  Phone Tree