

# Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



## February 2015 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

#### **FEBRUARY MEETING**

**DATE:** February 15th

**TIME:** Sunday, 2:30 - 4:30pm

**LOCATION:** Peninsula Center Library 701 Silver Spur Road, RHE

**TOPICS:**

GMOs: Educate, Legislate, Off your Plate!  
Taking On CA's Third Rail: Prop 13 Reform

**SPEAKERS:**

Jim Montgomery, Co-leader, labelGMOs.org  
Kelly Osajima, Evolve Campaign Coordinator

#### **MARCH MEETING**

**DATE:** March 15th

**TIME:** Sunday, 2:30 - 4:30pm

**LOCATION:** Peninsula Center Library 701 Silver Spur Road, RHE

**TOPIC:** Money Out of Politics

**SPEAKER:** D'Marie Mulattieri, California Clean Money Campaign

#### **Inside This Month's Issue:**

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**Assembly District Election Results**  
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**Movie Review - Citizen Four** Page 3

#### **Nominating Committee Seeks Board Candidates**

**by Connie Sullivan**

The nominating committee for the 2015-2016 candidate slate is Kay Jue ([pvedem@yahoo.com](mailto:pvedem@yahoo.com)), Evelyn Granata ([ekg224@juno.com](mailto:ekg224@juno.com)) and me (Connie Sullivan, [pvedems@gmail.com](mailto:pvedems@gmail.com)). Please contact any one of us if you would like to run for a PV Democrats board position beginning July 1, 2015.

### February Meeting

#### **GMOs: Educate, Legislate, Off Our Plates!**

In the US in 2014, genetically modified organisms make up 94% of the soybean acreage, 93% of all corn, 96% of all cotton and 95% of the sugar beets. The US does not require GMO labeling; yet over 60 other countries either require labeling or ban genetically engineered food. Jim Montgomery is the co-leader for the LabelGMOs (<http://www.labelgmos.org/>) South Bay group. This group got Prop 37 on the 2012 ballot, and had it not been defeated likely due to huge infusions of corporate money, it would have given us the right to know if our food had been genetically modified. LabelGMOs advocates for a food supply that is healthy, environmentally sustainable, humane, and socially just. They feel GMOs fail on all those metrics. Jim has been following GMOs since the mid-1990s introduction of the Flavr Savr tomato, the first genetically engineered crop to be granted a license for human consumption. That tomato was pulled from the market in 1997, yet many others with highly questionable genes remain. Monsanto has the largest market share of genetically engineered organisms in the world, and though there have been no relevant long-term studies, this big ag/chemical/biotech/military corporation is attempting to convince us that GMOs are safe. Jim will tell us why they aren't safe and what we can do to get GMOs out of our food supply.

#### **Taking On California's Third Rail: Prop 13 Reform**

Proposition 13 is marketed primarily as a protection that helps homeowners avoid being taxed out of their homes, but actually large corporations benefit the most. Large corporations are apt to remain in their same headquarters for longer than homeowners remain in their homes,

so property re-assessments rarely occur for commercial properties. Chevron saves almost a billion dollars every year in California property taxes due to Prop 13! Meanwhile, California schools have now sunk to 49th in the nation in education funding. By making corporations pay their fair share, at least \$6 billion a year in desperately needed funds for public education could be generated. Evolve (<http://www.evolve-ca.org>), a Bay Area non-profit group is working to increase public education funding by advocating for reforming the commercial side of Prop 13. The Los Angeles City Council has officially endorsed reforming Prop. 13 by passing Evolve's "Close the Loophole" Resolution. Our speaker, Kelly Osajima, has served as Evolve's campaign coordinator for the past two years. As Budget Committee Chair for the UC Student Association Board of Directors during her student years at UCLA, Kelly developed a statewide campaign to advocate for Prop 13 reform, and organized UC students across the state in direct actions, lobby visits, and protests. She recently served as Program Coordinator for the Greenlining Institute (which works to empower and develop the next generation of multi-ethnic leaders to advance racial and economic equity and create positive social change) and developed its first voter education campaign for the 2012 election cycle.

#### **January Meeting Report** **by Connie Sullivan**

On Saturday, January 17 the Palos Verdes Democrats met at St Luke's Presbyterian Church in Rolling Hills Estates to hear from one of our most respected living Democrats – Governor Michael Dukakis.

Governor Dukakis gave a wide-ranging talk that meandered a bit and was peppered with wry

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comments, but always returned to his main themes having to do with Democrats taking credit for our considerable recent accomplishments and the importance of organizing to win political campaigns.



*Gov. Dukakis speaking to the PV Democrats at St Lukes Presbyterian Church*

The Governor began with an apology for having to reschedule his talk due to illness. And before launching into his talk he mentioned that at the end of the quarter he's heading to Tokyo for a conference on creating a framework for peace and security in the Pacific. He's very concerned where the country is headed in foreign policy. He asked rhetorically "What do 3 new super carriers have to do with handling the threat against ISIS?"

Next Gov. Dukakis began to talk about one of his main themes, the lesson of the November 2014 election saying the best defense is a good offense. "I don't get it." FDR never let the country forget about Herbert Hoover and his policies. We need to remind people every day about how and why we came to be in the mess we were in, in 2009. One reason was Bush's disastrous foreign policy thanks to his apocalyptic views.

Like Obama, Bill Clinton inherited a mess. But, by his last year in office we had full employment and the first budgetary surplus. "Remember those days? We're not telling people this." Clinton's last state of the union proposed that we could have a tax cut, but we needed to be concerned about Social Security and the national debt. Rather than cut taxes, he recommended a 10-12 year plan to reduce/eliminate the debt and tried to sell it as saving Social Security. The American people wanted the plan and if Gore had been elected that's

what would have happened. It was a very conservative plan.

Dukakis said he considers himself to be a conservative person (so much so that his kids threaten a Costco intervention now and then).

The economic policies of the Bush administration were disastrous – financial institutions need to be regulated. Massachusetts has state banks that are closely regulated by the state and they didn't fail in 2008.

Deregulating the banks was Clinton's worst mistake. And now the Republicans are trying to repeal Dodd-Frank, which isn't too strong to begin with.

Republicans are still proposing Herbert Hoover's economics. Nations can't cut spending in a recession and expect to recover economically.

John Maynard Keynes taught FDR to spend and not impose austerity as the way out of the Depression.

In 2009, we were lucky to have Fed Chair Bernanke who had studied the Depression and knew to buy U.S. bonds

with newly printed money. And this program propped up the economy.

And in 2009 and 2010 we had a President and a Democratic Congress that ran a stimulus program. We had two years of good governance.

The notion that Europe could pull out of the recession with austerity programs was crazy.

So where are we today? —Doing pretty well. And that's a direct result of the 2009-2010 policies. Democrats did that.

Dukakis said that, as he watched the 2014 election, he didn't see any Democrats saying the Democrats had saved the economy or provided universal healthcare for the first time.

He then asked who the first presidential candidate was to propose healthcare. That was Teddy Roosevelt in the 1912 Bull Moose campaign. The US was passing workers' compensation laws and other forms of social welfare at that time. And TR asked why shouldn't we cover working families for



*From left, Paul Golden, Gov. Dukakis, President Carol Moeller, Board Member Susie Boone, and Stacey Michaels*

healthcare? In 1916 Calvin Coolidge ran for Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor and won. He proposed universal healthcare during that campaign.

Nixon also proposed universal healthcare. Ted Kennedy says his worst mistake was not taking Nixon up on his proposal. Finally, Obama got it done and "I don't know why we're apologizing for this." It's great to tell people that we're going to get rid of pre-existing conditions, but the central issue is who are we insuring?

The overwhelming majority of the uninsured are working people. They go to the emergency

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room and we're all paying for it. "It's crazy. I don't know why we didn't make healthcare for working families the central issue." The Senate candidates should have been proud to take credit for this, not run away from it.

Dukakis was so concerned about this point that he called the White House and spoke to the young woman in charge of healthcare communications and told her its all about working people. And she said what's your source for this? Even Senator Chuck Shumer said maybe we shouldn't have done this.

As we approach 2016 we need to get a lot more aggressive about taking credit for the things Democrats have achieved to improve people's lives. "No more dancing around, no more defensiveness."

Digressing a bit he said he thinks the country needs high-speed rail. "Who was the president responsible for the transcontinental railroad?" Lincoln did that, right in the middle of the Civil War. "When did good transportation become a partisan issue?"

Democrats need to sharpen our criticism of Republican economic policy, which is nothing more than Herbert Hoover economics. Now that the economy is going well the Republicans want to take some credit. "For what?"

Obama and Democrats need to claim credit for getting us out of a near depression and restoring the economy.

Who's going to run for president, he asked? Hillary? Elizabeth Warren? Not Elizabeth. She shouldn't. "Kitty and I worked our heads off to help her get elected"; she wouldn't have won without a 2,150 strong precinct captain organization. But she has a very important role to play in the Senate and we need her there.

Who's going to run on other side? He feels somewhat responsible for George Bush's presidency because he failed to beat Bush's father. Then Dukakis mentioned that Jeb Bush and he debated in 1996. He came away amazed at how deep Jeb's conservatism ran. Well to the right of his brother.

At this point the Governor took a number of questions dealing with, women's issues, the effect of Fox News on political discourse, the minimum wage, the Citizens United ruling,

precinct walking, money in politics, healthcare, off-year election turn out, independent voters, how to motivate voters to get out and vote, and retaking the Senate.

He reiterated that we have to focus on genuine economic opportunity and shouldn't stray from that central issue. We need to knock on people's doors systematically, not take a casual stroll through the neighborhood. And we should even knock on Republican doors.

He said that he likes Hillary Clinton and thinks she would be a good president. Some say she's too close to Wall Street but "she's not Bill."

We will need 200,000-precinct effort to win. That's all. And he suggested the campaign could build such an army by recruiting campaign donors as precinct captains.

## **Assembly District Election Meeting Results by Connie Sullivan**

On Saturday, January 10 the California Democratic Party convened an Assembly District Election Meeting (usually called an ADEM for short) in our 66th Assembly District. The purpose of the meeting was to elect delegates from our assembly district to the state party's central committee and to elect an Executive Board delegate from among those elected to the delegation.

Delegates will serve for two years and attend the two annual California Democratic Party conventions in 2015 and 2016.

This was only the second ADEM to be convened in the new 66th Assembly District. This ADEM was more hotly contested than the one convened two years ago, with 20 women and 16 men vying for the 14 positions (7 women and 7 men make up a delegation).

Carol Moeller, PV Democrats President, was elected to the delegation.

Tony Hale, past president of our club was elected to the Executive Board of the California Democratic Party from the 66th Assembly District.

Others elected were:  
Diane Wallace  
Jaya Bhumitra  
Hon. Amy Howorth

Hon. Nanette Barragan  
Lauren Pizer Mains  
Kathleen Paralusz  
Lee Fink  
Jonathan Beutler  
Tony Salvaggio  
Hon. Todd Loewenstein  
Sam Liu  
Mark Henderson

Congratulations to all those successfully elected to represent us at the convention.

## **Movie Review: *Citizenfour* by Carol Moeller**

Film director Laura Poitras had been working on chronicling government surveillance, including interviews with WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange and investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald, when in January 2013 she began receiving encrypted data from someone calling himself Citizenfour. In June, she and her film crew, along with Greenwald, were invited to Hong Kong to meet this person, who was revealed to be Edward Snowden. A computer systems administrator who had worked for the CIA and the NSA, Snowden explains his reasons for the release of files establishing covert NSA monitoring of US citizens, and displays considerable human anguish in the process. The resultant documentary uniquely chronicles in real time Edward Snowden's essentially hostage situation in Hong Kong, during which time he received notice that he was charged with violating the Espionage Act, punishable by up to 30 years in prison. Facing an increasingly limited array of choices, Snowden amazingly managed to fly to Moscow, where lacking both a valid passport and a visa, he remained in the airport for over a month, until he finally was permitted to enter Russia. Whether you see Snowden as a whistleblower or a traitor, the ability to see an international story played out as it actually happened is an outstanding journalistic coup and as a result, *Citizenfour* has been nominated for an Oscar in the Best Documentary Feature category.



*Edward Snowden*



President: Carol Moeller 310-541-5526  
 President Emeritus: Connie Sullivan 310-378-1554  
 Vice President: Lynn Bommer 310-374-1188  
 Recording Secretary: Judy Pang 310-375-5783  
 Corresponding Secretary: Sheila Papayans 310-373-7978  
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 Publicity: Paul & Margaret Paetz  
 Electronic Media: Brian Flannigan 310-938-3647  
 Newsletter Editor: Connie Sullivan 310-378-1554  
 Newsletter Designer: Ann Nye 310-373-6805  
 Hospitality: Marta Liepzig 301-828-8112  
 Mailing: Ron Moeller 310-541-5526  
 Special Projects: Brent Hummer 310-871-2865  
 LACDP Associate: Stacey Michaels 310-377-0652

#### PVPDC Officers for 2015 Contact Info

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



Palos Verdes  
 Democrats  
 Founded 1952

## Palos Verdes Democrats

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

[www.pvpdemocrats.org](http://www.pvpdemocrats.org)

As a member of  
 the Palos Verdes  
 Democrats,  
 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**  
**Please fill in all items to ensure that we have your full and correct current information.**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail 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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