

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

June 2016 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

Social time: 2pm

JUNE MEETING

DATE: Sunday, June 12th (meeting one week earlier to avoid Father's Day)

MEETING TIME: 2:30 - 4:30pm

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library Community Room; 701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: *Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA*, a documentary from Brave New Films

JULY MEETING

DATE: Sunday, July 17th

MEETING TIME: 2:30 - 4:30pm

LOCATION: St. Luke's Presbyterian Church (in the Garden); 26825 Rolling Hills Rd, RHE, CA 90274

TOPIC: Installation Party - this year we are also inviting non-members; so bring your friends!

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Do you have something you'd like to donate to our monthly fundraiser drawing; like a plant or memorabilia?

If so, please email Carol at rpvdem@gmail.com.

June Membership Meeting

Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA

Noted filmmaker Robert Greenwald's latest documentary has the NRA squarely in its sights. The firearms industry in the US has annual revenues at over \$11 billion, but as Greenwald points out, their profits come at the heartbreaking expense of one firearm death happening every 16 minutes in this country. Although 92% of Americans favor background checks on all gun buyers, this has never been a substantive legislative consideration, without a doubt due to pressure such as the \$27 million spent by gun lobbyists to sway Congressional races in 2014. "There are many who are not taking sufficient steps to take guns away from abusers, and some of that goes back to the legislators, to the morally and financially corrupt elected officials," Greenwald states.

Known for his politically to-the-point documentaries that involve such topics such as the political influence of the Koch brothers, Walmart's treatment of low wage workers, and how the Bush administration misled Americans on the Iraq war, in this documentary Greenwald calls for gun storage regulations (did you know that in 2015, toddlers killed more Americans than Americans killed terrorists?), tougher background checks, restrictions on interstate



trade and longer waiting periods for gun buyers. Ironically, he is NOT making a killing on this movie. With a goal to save lives, his Brave New Films production company is offering this film to organizations like ours for free! Greenwald said he hopes that viewing this will inspire people, especially in this election year, to get involved in the anti-gun violence movement.

May Meeting Report by Laura Hines-Jurgen

The first speaker **Martin Wachs, PhD**, spoke to the issue of Crisis in Transportation Finance.

Wachs taught at Cal and UCLA, served at the RAND Corporation and has written widely on issues of equity in transportation policy, crime in public transit, and the response of transportation systems to natural disasters, including earthquakes. His most recent work focuses on transportation finance in relation to planning and policy.



Martin Wachs, PhD

"Few people know how the roads are paid for," he said.

Throughout history, townspeople would clean up and repair the roads. Then the practice of hiring contractors to keep the roads in good repair led to construction companies. Paying for this led to taxes and toll roads.

The automobile complicated this system. As the population grew and families acquired multiple

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cars or trucks, leaders became alarmed to find 45% of the state budget used to maintain roads.

Finding solutions to pay this huge bill is a constant dilemma. The road tax turned into a gas tax. Automated toll booths and car registration fees were seen as second-best options and grew in popularity as people opposed new taxes but wanted to have better roads.

When gas was first taxed, it was \$.02 a gallon but climbed constantly. The federal government built and paid for the roads initially but maintenance fell to the states.

In California the gas tax is very efficient; 1% of the funds are used in administrative fees, the rest goes to road maintenance. And because it's not a tax but a users' fee, the money can be put in special funds or into particular accounts to be spent on public transit or used for major repairs.

The California gas tax in 1922 was \$.10 a gallon. It has not followed the needs of transportation, as today it is only \$.18 a gallon.

With fuel consumption going down and people using the roads more, we are using less fuel per mile of traffic. Electric and hybrid cars compound the problem as they use less gas per mile so over time we are losing money on the collected gas tax.

We desperately need to raise money to safely run our transportation system, which includes infrastructure repairs and upgrades.

Various proposals are being offered:

First, people will be asked to vote an increase in the gas tax on themselves.

Second, planning and building more toll roads and center of the freeway HOV lanes to reduce congestion. Funds would be voted on to increase and maintain these road services.

Third, the following option is multi-dimensional, creative, widely discussed and being studied. It would require replacing the gas tax with different options:

1) Individual cars would have their miles monitored by the GPS already installed in their auto at the factory.

2) Increase property taxes and/or go to combination taxes using gas tax and the sales tax.

In the 1990s we decided to have private construction build new freeways like the 91 so people can buy into the "Lexus Lanes" to be used whenever needed. It's not just rich people who use them but business types like carpenters, plumbers and people in an emergency that need to get to place more quickly. These lanes are heavily used.

3) Senate Bill 1017 contains a direct user fee to fund our roads. The technical advisory or TACT is to design a road charge system tested in California using a trial by volunteers. 5000 volunteers from all segments of our population will test the system. If the volunteers decide they like the system, it would replace the gasoline tax, which has been in effect for about 100 years.

Oregon already has this program in place. Before it started people were apprehensive, but when it works, people like it and the fears disappear.

In California the public is squarely against this program right now. Their concerns deal

with privacy and data security issues.

The winners in such a system would be rural drivers that have the least fuel-efficient vehicles. The people who would lose money are the ones with the hybrid vehicles like the Prius, the Tesla and other electric cars.

The search is on to find a way to accommodate all people's needs and to find gas tax alternatives that allay concerns for those who don't want their privacy compromised.

Trial participants will have a monitor put on their GPS and buy the rights to drive on the roads they use. Anyone interested in volunteering for this program can go to the website for details and to sign up: californiaroadchargepilot.com

The second speaker, **Jim Kennedy**, is a candidate for the Water Replenishment District, Div. 2. Kennedy serves on the board of the California League of Conservation Voters. Mr. Kennedy has been involved in building community support for public works projects through policy formation and facilitating dialogue in project development and implementation.



Jim Kennedy, Water Replenishment District, Division 2

Kennedy is currently the only Democrat in the race for Water Replenishment District Board Division 2, which will appear on the November ballot. He is running for office because he sees a real need for leadership due to the drought. The district consists of the cities from Playa Del Ray to south of the 405, all South Bay cities Palos Verdes Peninsula, San Pedro, Wilmington, Harbor City, Westchester, Lomita and Lawndale. The agency supports the ground water for all of these cities.

"Keep in mind, there is plenty of water. Today we must learn to deal with water scarcity. We can achieve and keep what we have if we know what to do and have the right people in place to do it."

"We don't have water from here or water from there we just have water that has to be used and reused wisely as every drop of water is needed. There are three sources of water: recycled water, storm water and imported water."

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We get 40% of our water from under the ground. The aquifer water is disbursed throughout the area. There are 300 wells, which are monitored every year to understand the composition of the water and to determine how much needs to be replenished. Water is then pumped back in equal or greater amounts for replenishment.

Due to the lack of other sources of water, people are pumping the groundwater more during this drought as there are no regulations yet on how and what to do.

Groundwater can be the backbone of sustainability locally. We need to be able to capture more of our storm water and get it into the ground rather than washed into the ocean. We also need to use more recycled water. This concept is simple but costly.

In California, most of California's rainwater falls north of the Delta but the majority of the population is south of that.

Climate change and the drought are changing the system we relied upon for so long. Precipitation levels are diminishing in the Sierra Madre Mountains, where a lot of fresh water is held in snowpack reserves and where much of Southern California's freshwater comes from.

When we have low snow packs we use more groundwater. This is why we need to build our underground water infrastructure so we can depend on our own local supply during drought years.

In 2014, we started looking at different areas in California that are more self-sustaining and integrating. All the agencies from flood control to irrigation to sanitation have to use the same water system. In the South Bay and LA we have five major watersheds in various capacities that work together to meet and fill our local water needs.

The Metropolitan Water District runs from San Diego to Ventura County, has 26 cities and agencies that work together. It was formed to build the Colorado aqueduct in the late 1920s.

The Water Replenishment District was formed in 1959 to control the cities that were over pumping groundwater. Over pumping wells so close to the ocean causes salt water to fill the wells and destroy the fresh water. We built

freshwater injection wells to block the seawater from intruding further. In Torrance they have a desalter, which filters out the brackish ocean water from the well water. This uses less energy than a desalinization plant.

We have two different basins in Pico Rivera, called pulling sites where surface water is directed and allowed to seep into the aquifer, a natural recycling method. By 2019 the construction in Pico Rivera will reduce almost 2/3 of our imported water. Funding sources are already here. In 2014 we passed \$7.51 billion in Prop One, of which 2.7 billion is set aside exclusively for groundwater renewal.

Right now throughout LA County we only use about 1% of our recycled water capacity, pulled from various areas in LA County. There is 11% of storm water capacity that could be used. This provides great upside potential for local water sources.

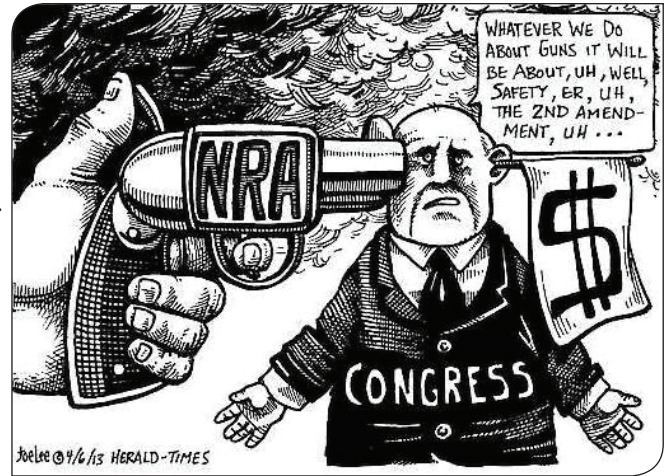
The Clean Water Act requires city agencies and storm water collection services to work together to create an integrated, sustainable water plan for storm water runoff. Cities will be fined for runoff in their jurisdictions.

Kennedy wants us to have a sense of urgency around this subject. Good public policies need to be implemented to keep water prices low. His plan is to make investments now so we can save money, preserve our quality of life with less impact on the environment while growing economically.

Save the Date! The PV Democrats Installation Party is on July 17

By Carol Moeller

Members who attended our May meeting voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee members Rascha Hall, Judy Pang and Donna Buttram for club officers to be installed on July 17th. We've been fortunate to have had a number of our most recent installation events taking place in Teresa Savo's beautiful garden. This year, we're planning a larger summer celebration and moving the



event to the garden at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, 26825 Rolling Hills Rd, RHE, CA 90274.

This year's event will celebrate our new officers and our wonderful Democratic elected officials at all levels of government. Former and future Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi and Congressman Ted Lieu will attend and we've extended invitations to others at both the local and state level.

This is shaping up to be a lovely summer picnic for our members and any and all Democrats living on the Peninsula and surrounding cities who might want to join us in celebration and to meet their elected officials.

So be sure to invite those you know who would like to meet and rub elbows with our federal, state and local officials in a casual and relaxed setting.

Here's the slate of officers we'll be installing:

President: Lynne Bommer
 1st Vice President: Kathy Bradford
 2nd Vice President: Connie Sullivan
 Recording Secretary: Rascha Hall
 Corresponding Secretary: Arline Korb
 Treasurer: Al Shadbourne
 Parliamentarian: Craig Williams
 Membership: Susie Boone
 Publicity: David Hall
 Newsletter Editor: vacant
 Newsletter Designer: Ann Nye
 Hospitality: Teresa Savo
 Precinct Captains: Connie Sullivan and DeeDee Gonzalez
 LACDP Associate Member: Stacey Michaels
 Webmaster: Reggie Jue
 Mailings: Ron Moeller
 President Emeritus: Carol Moeller



Palos Verdes Democrats Officers for 2015-2016

- 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
- Treasurer: Al Shadbourne 310-326-4953
- Parliamentarian: Maria Martinez 310-833-5083
- Membership: Susie Boone 310-686-0455
- Publicity: David Hall 310-377-7334
- Newsletter Editor: Laura Hines-Jurgen 310-544-2424
- Hospitality: Teresa Savo 310-541-1139
- Precinct Captains: Connie Sullivan 310-378-1554
Dee Dee Gonzalez 210-367-9727
- LACDP Associate Member: Stacey Michaels 310-377-0652

Palos Verdes Democrats

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

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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