

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

January 2015 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

JANUARY MEETING

DATE: January 12th

TIME: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Harbor College Miller Recital Hall; 1111 Figueroa Place, Wilmington, CA

The PV Democrats will arrange carpools

TOPICS: The Democratic Party, Where Are We Now?

SPEAKER: Governor Michael Dukakis

FEBRUARY MEETING

DATE: February 16th

TIME: 2:30 - 4:30pm

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library 701 Silver Spur Road, RHE

TOPIC: GMOs in Our Food

SPEAKERS: Bill Brown and others to be confirmed

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Recent Club Expenditures

Since our last report, the Club donated \$400 to Emily's List and \$80 towards an ad in the program for the Los Angeles County Democratic Party's annual banquet.

Do you have something you'd like to donate to our monthly fundraiser drawing; like a plant or memorabilia? If so, please e-mail Carol at rpvdem@gmail.com.

January Meeting Governor Michael Dukakis: The Democratic Party, Where Are We Now?

The Democratic Party suffered heartbreaking losses in this past election. A Tea Party Republican squeaked by our incumbent 66th Assemblyperson by only 706 votes, and around the country, many hard-fought races were lost. Where does our party go from here? To answer that and other strategy questions, the Palos Verdes Democrats in collaboration with Los Angeles Harbor College proudly present Former Massachusetts Governor and the 1988 Democratic candidate for President, Michael Dukakis.

The son of Greek immigrants with strong educational and work ethics (his father graduated from Harvard Medical School and his mother was a teacher), Michael was an Eagle Scout, graduated with honors from Swarthmore College then served in the US Army in Korea, subsequently graduating from Harvard Law School. He soon became involved in local politics, which escalated into 18 years in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, during which time he married Kitty Dickson, Jewish daughter of a conductor of the Boston Pops and member of the Boston Symphony. Dukakis was elected as Governor in 1974, but state party insiders refused to nominate him for a second term, despite the fact that he had inherited a record deficit and record high unemployment and is credited with helping Massachusetts emerge from one of its worst financial crises. He taught at Harvard during the ensuing four years but ran once again, and this time he beat the incumbent and again was installed as Governor with John Kerry as his Lieutenant Governor. He served in this capacity for eight years, during which time he became a strong mass transit proponent (he even rode the subway to work each day!).

Dukakis was the Democratic candidate for President in 1988, running against George H W Bush. During the campaign, Bush painted Dukakis as soft on crime because of his weekend prisoner furlough program. Since that election, Dukakis has published several books and spent most of his career teaching and helping Democratic causes. (According to Warren's book, A Fighting Chance, he and Kitty helped Elizabeth Warren in her successful run for the Senate.) His research has included national health care policy reform and the lessons that national policy makers can learn from state reform efforts.

Michael and Kitty had two daughters together (their first daughter died soon after birth), and one son from Kitty's first marriage. Michael's first cousin is Oscar-winning actress Olympia Dukakis.

November Meeting Report by Connie Sullivan

Club President, Carol Moeller opened the meeting by letting everyone know that the race in the 66th Assembly District had tightened and the latest information was that it was now considered too close to call by the Secretary of State.

Recording Secretary Judy Pang read a letter she had written to the President letting him know of her support for his intent to issue an executive order on immigration, his position on net neutrality and his agreement with China to reduce greenhouse emissions. She further requested he not sign off on the Keystone XL pipeline if it should come to his desk. Judy asked that members co-sign her letter. And many did.

Carol and Hans Grellmann opened a discussion of the Peninsula Center's new management and

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their rules for "Expressive Activities". The rules would effectively shut down our club's tabling activities on Sunday mornings. A consensus opinion seemed to be to ignore the rules unless the market management actually tries to enforce them.

Voting with Your Wallet

Carol launched into the main topic of the day by observing that Fair Trade activists through their Raise the Bar campaign had forced the Hershey company to announce they would "source 100% certified cocoa for their global chocolate product lines by 2020 and accelerate their programs to help eliminate child labor in the cocoa region of West Africa."

Carol then introduced the first two speakers, Joan Harper and Jane Affonso, two amazing women who have dedicated their adult lives working for social and civil justice and are continuing those efforts through the Fair Trade movement.

According to Wikipedia: "Fair trade is an organized social movement whose stated goal is to help producers in developing countries achieve better trading conditions and to promote sustainability. Members of the movement advocate the payment of higher prices to exporters, as well as higher social and environmental standards. The movement focuses in particular on commodities, or products which are typically exported from developing countries to developed



Joan Harper, Founder of Fair Trade Los Angeles

better trading conditions and to promote sustainability. Members of the movement advocate the payment of higher prices to exporters, as well as higher social and environmental standards. The movement focuses in particular on commodities, or products which are typically exported from developing countries to developed

countries, but also consumed in domestic markets (e.g. Brazil and India) most notably handicrafts, coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, honey, cotton, wine, fresh fruit, chocolate, flowers, gold and 3D printer filament. The movement seeks to promote greater equity in international trading partnerships through dialogue, transparency, and respect. It promotes sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers in developing countries."

Interestingly, Joan and Jane met in jail when they were arrested for participating in a civil disobedience event in Los Angeles.



Joan was working at the Office of Justice and Peace at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles when she founded Fair Trade LA. Jane Affonso is the Deputy Director of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. Jane helped establish the Ten Thousand Villages store in Redondo Beach this year to sell Fair Trade items.

There are over 100 Ten Thousand Villages stores in the U.S. and Canada, started by a Mennonite Missionary in 1948. They sell a variety of Fair Trade crafts and chocolate products. As a fundraiser, Carol sent e-mail flyers out to members that allows 15% of their purchase prices to be donated to the PV Democrats through the month of December.

Carolyn and Ray Waters announced a Fair

Trade Fair to be held at the Pacific Unitarian Church on the following Sunday, November 23.

Club members had many questions for the two. One in particular asked about the possible connection between garment worker pay and Fair Trade. Joan made the observation that our immigration problem in the U.S. could be alleviated through the Fair Trade movement, because if people could make a sustainable living in their own countries they would not be interested in emigrating to the U.S.

Election 2014 Analysis

Our next speaker was Sergio Carrillo, Regional Chair of the California Democratic Party. Sergio stated that a red wave that washed over the U. S. was stopped at the California border. As terrible as the result was for America, it resulted in good outcomes for California, with all statewide offices going to Democrats and Democrats picking up one more U.S. Representative seat (Pete Aguilar, San Bernardino).

The only downside for California was the loss of 3 incumbent Democrats in the Assembly (including the loss of our own Al Muratsuchi). However, we still control 60% of both houses, which is pretty good. There are only 3 things we cannot do without a 2/3 majority – override a veto of the Governor, place a constitutional amendment on the ballot and raise taxes.

Sergio, like most everyone else, decried the fact that voter turnout was so low and that affected Democratic candidates more than Republican candidates.



Sergio Carrillo, Regional Chair of the California Democratic Party He stated that Democrats lost because they didn't stand up for Democratic values and pointed to Arkansas Senator Mark Pryor as a noteworthy example. He ran away from raising the minimum wage until he saw it was popular and then he was for it. He paid the price for his craven flip-flop.

Sergio went over a number of vote

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enhancing strategies that Democrats need to employ next time around, such as using text messages to reach the under-30 crowd. When asked about the tsunami of mail voters received in the last election he admitted that consultants make money on mail and so they like it, but it also remains the best way of communicating with voters.

Sergio provided a number of examples of successful strategies from his experience as a campaign consultant.

Hans Grellmann stated that instead of a "red wave" we experienced a "green wave", by which he meant the country had been inundated by political money.

At the end of the meeting Carol conducted an election for Assembly District Democratic Council representative from our club. Connie Sullivan was elected.

After the opportunity drawing, Carol adjourned the meeting.

Interview with PV Democrats Member Teresa Savo by Margaret Paez



Teresa Savo, 54-year Palos Verdes resident and lifelong Democrat

Age: 80 (but doesn't look it)

Palos Verdes Resident: 54 years, since 1960

Language Spoken: English, Spanish & Italian

College: Marymount

First job: Secretarial pool at Hughes Aircraft at age 18

Volunteer duties: Besides being a 10-year

Board Member of the Palos Verdes Democrats, Ms Savo has also spent 28 years as a docent for the Natural History Museum; 12 years working with the Casa de los Angelitos, a safe and secure residence for pregnant women and she teaches English as a second language and citizenship classes at Presentation Learning Center in Watts.

Where were you born?

El Paso, Texas but we moved to California when I was 18. My parents emigrated to Texas from Mexico in the 1930s and became citizens in the late 40s. I remember vividly helping my father study for his citizenship test as a girl. I'm still helping people study for their citizenship tests, it's really wonderful.

Why a Democrat?

Because I'm smart (laughing) no, really. I come from a family of immigrants, but we're all immigrants here, aren't we? It's because my family believed in the ideals that Democrats held. On my mantle growing up there was a triumvirate of sorts, the three men my parents held dear, Jesus Christ, FDR and Truman.

Considering the poor voter turn out, especially in this last mid-term election, if you could do anything to change that, what would it be?

I would pass a law that you must vote. It's a great privilege we all have in this country of ours and to squander it is terrible.

Most scenic part of Palos Verdes?

The cliffs, starting at Malaga Cove.

If you could sit down and have dinner with any president, living or dead, who would it be?

Easy. Barack Obama.

What keeps you coming back to volunteer for the Palos Verdes Democrats year after year?

I enjoy the people. They are an extremely intelligent group; progressive, knowledgeable, committed, caring and I'm very happy to be there.

Book Review: A Fighting Chance by Elizabeth Warren by Carol Moeller

Elizabeth Warren experienced economic difficulties first hand as one of four children in a financially struggling family living in Oklahoma.

After two years at George Washington University, she succumbed to her "women as housewives" upbringing, forfeiting a debate scholarship to marry. After giving birth to two children, Warren left behind that traditionalist thinking, doggedly cobbling together school, work and child care, eventually graduating from Rutgers School of Law. After a divorce and remarriage, she held law school teaching positions at universities in Texas and Pennsylvania, and ultimately became a law professor at Harvard, specializing in bankruptcy.

Refusing to accept the Wall Street mantra that those who declare bankruptcy are deadbeats, Warren collaborated on studies that determined that most are actually working families with unexpected setbacks. These studies also show that the percentage of these desperate families continues to grow. Why? Because, as Ms. Warren states, the system is rigged by greedy bankers who pressure "lapdog" politicians to pass laws removing protections against predatory economic practices.

After "too-big-to-fail" bank policies brought on the 2008 recession, Warren served as part of a committee to keep TARP money as transparent as possible. President Obama then tapped Warren to oversee the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to defend ordinary Americans against unfair financial transactions. Due to heavy Wall Street pressure, Warren was denied as the obvious choice to head the agency, but as a result, she was available to accept the challenge to run for the Senate in Massachusetts. In this race, Warren and her opponent, Scott Brown, created an interesting model to thwart PAC money by signing a "People's Pledge". This agreement stipulated that the campaign that benefitted from advertising by an outside group would donate to charity 50 percent of the cost of that advertising. Since money spent by outside groups would ultimately cost their intended beneficiary, outside funding ceased and had no impact in that race. Although Scott Brown refused to sign such a pledge in his current New Hampshire race, candidates across the country have signed similar pledges, including Eric Garcetti in his successful bid for LA Mayor.

Elizabeth Warren continues to be an advocate for fair financial practices. Recently in her role on the Senate Banking Committee, she recommended jail time for Wall Street cheats. A majority of Americans agree.

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Palos Verdes Democrats
 Founded 1952

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

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

Please contact me to help in the following areas:

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