

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

September 2014 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274
Visit Us on the Web at www.pvpedemocrats.org
"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

DATE: September 21st

TIME: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library
701 Silver Spur Rd, RHE

TOPIC: Nov. 4 Election Ballot Propositions

SPEAKER: League of Women Voters

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: October 19th

TIME: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: St. Luke's Presbyterian Church
26825 Rolling Hills Rd., RHE 90274

TOPICS: Planned Parenthood in the wake
of Hobby Lobby and SD 26 Candidate
Forum

SPEAKERS:

Dinah Stevens, Planned Parenthood
Ben Allen and Sandra Fluke

Inside This Month's Issue:

**September Membership Meeting
Event** Page 1

August Meeting Report Page 1-2

**The Removal of Prop 49 from the
November Ballot** Page 2

**Book Suggestion:
My Beloved World** Page 2-3

**Member Profile – Barbara and Dick
Trakas** Page 3

PV Democrats Help Al Muratsuchi
Page 3

September Membership Meeting Event: November 4 Ballot Propositions

For our September 21st meeting, we are pleased to have the Palos Verdes League of Women Voters provide a look at the November 4 ballot propositions. As their mission states, The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government, influencing public policy through education and advocacy. Since the league never supports or opposes any political party or candidate, we will be receiving an unbiased look at the 6 propositions. The list below gives basic descriptions of the propositions that the LWV will be presenting.

Proposition 1 would authorize \$7.12 billion in general obligation bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects.

Proposition 2 would increase amount of potential savings in the state's rainy day fund from 5% to 10% of the General Fund.

Proposition 45 would require changes associated with health insurance to be approved by the California Insurance Commissioner.

Proposition 46 would increase the state's cap on damages that can be assessed in medical negligence lawsuits to over \$1 million from the current cap of \$250,000, and would also require random drug testing of doctors.

Proposition 47 would mandate misdemeanor instead of felony sentences for "non-serious, nonviolent crimes," such as petty theft and drug possession, unless the defendant has prior convictions for violent and serious crimes.

Proposition 48 would uphold AB 277 that was

enacted by the California State Legislature to allow Indian gaming on non-Indian lands and exempt certain environmental restrictions.

Proposition 49 was unfortunately removed from the ballot by the California Supreme court. See Christine Mei's article in this newsletter.

August Meeting Report by Carol Moeller

Our August 17th general membership meeting included a clip of a panel discussion entitled "The Supreme Court in Review" moderated by Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the UC Irvine School of Law and included other noted legal experts. In the words of Mr. Chemerinsky, "This is a court that really lacks empathy of those who are different from them." My layman's understanding of the decisions areas follows:

- States can ban affirmative action in college admissions as the court feels this is an example of racial profiling (6-2 ruling, one abstention).
- Sectarian prayer is OK in legislative sessions (5-4 decision).
- An 8-0 decision against Coca-Cola for misleading product labeling.
- An 8-0 decision ruling that using harmful substances against someone does not fall under the auspices of the use of chemical weapons.
- In a 6-3 decision, the court decided in favor of television networks regarding third party streaming of network programs.
- The court ruled 9-0 that Obama's recess appointments were unconstitutional, despite a

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

"centuries-long" history of presidential recess appointments.

- Another 9-0 decision determined that police cannot search cell phone data without a warrant.
- In the Hobby Lobby case, a 5-4 decision determined that corporations can have religious beliefs, and they justified this based on the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.
- The court then almost immediately contradicted it's rationale in the Hobby Lobby case in a 5-3 (one abstention) decision for Wheaton College.
- Finally, in another 5-4 vote in the Harris v Quinn case, the court added another impediment to unions by requiring an "opt in" rather than an "opt out" dues collection system.

Following these discussions, Tom Long did an excellent job of cautioning that the majority decisions weren't always reflecting a consensus among the justices; instead they are agreements on very slim issues within each decision. However, the 8-0 cell phone decision did appear to Mr. Long as consensus, which is why he felt that the cell phone case was the most important, and would most impact future decisions.



Tom Long, former Rancho Palos Verdes Mayor

Membership Renewal Reminder

For those who have not yet renewed their membership, this will be the last newsletter you will be sent. You can renew online at www.pvpdemocrats.org, or complete the form on the back of this newsletter and send in your dues.

The Removal of Prop 49 from the November Ballot

By Christine Mei

The California Supreme Court, in a 5 to 1 decision, recently removed Prop 49 from the November ballot. Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, an appointee of Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, cast the lone dissenting vote. Justice Goodwin Liu, Governor Jerry Brown's sole appointee on the court, sided with the majority.

Prop 49, which began as SB1272 and was authored by state Senator Ted Lieu, would have asked California voters if Congress should overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision of 2010. The California legislature approved this advisory measure, and Governor Brown agreed to put it on the November ballot so that voters would have a chance to express their views on the Citizens United decision. The passage of this measure, even if legally non-binding, could help create a nationwide opposition to a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions that have seriously undermined our representative democracy.

The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association filed a lawsuit last month to block Prop 49 from appearing on the November ballot. It argued that lawmakers do not have the authority to use legislative power for a public opinion poll. The state Supreme Court accepted that argument and said it needs more time to

consider whether the non-binding advisory measure can be placed on a California ballot.

The public is greatly disappointed by the court decision but is not giving up. "Yes on Prop 49" (Money Out Voters In) proponents have created a petition calling on the California Supreme Court to "Restore Prop 49 to the ballot." Common Cause, which is leading the effort to overturn Citizens United, has organized a "Let the People Vote" rally across the state to protest the decision by the California Supreme Court.

Book Suggestion:

My Beloved World

by Sonia Sotomayor

Reviewed By Ron Moeller

Sonia Sotomayor's autobiography may be viewed as a narrative about overcoming the odds. Born to Puerto Rican immigrants living in a housing project in the Bronx, Sonia was challenged early on by warring parents (her father was an alcoholic who died when she was nine), and a diagnosis of juvenile diabetes. By age 7, she realized that she couldn't depend upon her parents to regularly give her insulin shots, so she learned how to correctly disinfect a syringe and inject herself. Her mother had a strong work ethic and was adamant that Sonia succeed in school and learn to speak English, but especially in Sonia's early years, was not the warm motherly type. As a result Sonia formed a very close relationship with her paternal Grandmother who supplied her with the type of nurture one would expect from parents.

At an early age she became fascinated with the library and also with the Perry Mason television show. As a result, she dreamed of studying law and becoming a judge, a dream that never faded. In high school Sonia became a stellar debater and ultimately graduated as valedictorian of her class. She parlayed her academic achievements together with newly instituted affirmative action laws to gain

continued on page 3

PRIORITYONE

PRINTING ★ COPYING ★ GRAPHICS

Phone (310) 831-8804 • FAX (310) 833-9598

E-mail - priority1@earthlink.net

Website: www.priorityoneprinting.com

Newsletter Printing Donated by PRIORITYONE

continued from page 2

admission to Princeton University, where she graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, then continued on to Yale Law School.



Author Sonia Sotomayor

Following law school, she worked hard and received a series of upward career positions. Along the way, her six-year marriage to her high school sweetheart ended amicably in divorce. The book concludes just before her appointment to the Supreme Court. Although she doesn't discuss much of her legal philosophy she does write of her support for affirmative action, which she characterizes as allowing under-privileged students to at least get a place at the starting line in the race for education and good careers. From childhood, her intelligence, competitive spirit, and passionate independence shaped the mold that would determine how she would conduct her life, and this book describes how her humble beginnings morphed into an enormously successful and admirable career.

Have you read a book or an article about a politically relevant person or issue that you want to share? If so, please send your write up to parkergw@earthlink.net. We want to hear from YOU!

Member Profile – Barbara and Dick Trakas

By Connie Sullivan

I hope to write an intermittent series highlighting some of our members and their activities outside the club. Many of our members participate in very interesting activities, or have or had special careers, or

worked with fascinating people. I think our membership would like to know about these aspects of our members' lives.

For this kickoff article, I've selected Barbara and Dick Trakas, loyal, longtime club members and former board members.

Thirty-two years ago, Barbara and Dick Trakas downsized from their large Lunada Bay home to a condo in the Palos Verdes Bay Club.

After some time, they noticed a path that lead down to the beach, but was gated, locked, in disrepair and unused. They discovered it was part of the condominium property, but kept inaccessible out of liability concerns.

The Trakas's saw the potential of the path to become a great amenity for the residents, but had to convince a very skeptical homeowners association to let them realize that potential. After a lot of convincing, they were allowed to work on the path, but were not provided any help. Barbara and Dick had to do it all themselves, with the help of any residents they could convince to pitch in.



Barbara and Dick Trakas

Every Saturday and Sunday for 20 years they devoted themselves to the project. The finished trail has very safe metal railings, a shored up path of gravel and railroad ties and scavenged concrete tiles from the

condominium pool upgrade, etc. There are beautiful plantings to keep the hill from eroding. There are landings with benches and flowerpots. And the highlight is the stone patio at the bottom with more seating, where many a resident has enjoyed a sunset while sipping wine.

The Trakas' substantially improved the property for all the residents and a grateful homeowners association named the path the Trakas Trail in honor of all Barbara and Dick's leadership and hard work.

PV Democrats Help Al Muratsuchi

By Carol Mueller

Supporting the Al Muratsuchi re-election campaign, the PV Democrats donated \$400 and co-hosted a fundraising social event at the fabulous home of Melanie and Richard Lundquist.



Al Muratsuchi (center) with Carol and Ron Moeller at the Lundquist gala event supporting Al's re-election

At our July meeting, the club auctioned off four tickets for this social event, and the lucky winners were Darlene Loiler, Toni and Dave Sargent and Dency Nelson. The members of the PV Democrats were well represented and donated generously at this fundraiser and plan to further support candidates as the November election date draws nearer.

Our November Turn-out According to a recent L.A. Times article, voters in the party out of power are more interested in voting in the mid-term elections. This could bring out enough more conservative voters to shift the balance of power in the Senate or consolidate it further in the House. However, a poll showed that Republicans are only slightly more enthusiastic about the November elections than the Democrats. It our responsibility as active Democrats to build more enthusiasm in our friends to motivate them to vote.

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 Shadbourn 310-326-4953
 Parliamentarian: Teresa Savo 310-541-1139
 Membership: Susie Boone 310-686-0455
 Publicity: Paul & Margaret Paetz 310-662-3068
 Electronic Media: Brian Flannigan 310-938-3647
 Newsletter Editor: Jerry Parker 310-377-7833
 Newsletter Designer: Ann Nye 310-373-6805
 Hospitality: Marta Liepzig 301-828-8122
 Mailing: Ron Moeller 310-541-5526
 Special Projects: Brent Humber 310-871-2865

PVPDC Officers for 2014 Contact Info



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:

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