

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

June 2018 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 24th

NOTE - the June meeting date was delayed a week to avoid Father's Day

MEETING TIME: 2:30 - 4:30pm

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

TOPIC: CA Primary Post-Mortem

SPEAKERS: CA Democrats Regional Director Sergio Carrillo

JULY MEETING

DATE: Sunday, July 15th

MEETING TIME: 4-7pm

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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June General Meeting

In June, fresh off of the primaries, we will be joined by Sergio Carrillo, Regional Director for The California Democratic Party (CADEM).

Sergio will give us a post-mortem on all of the key primary races in the region and a lay of the land as we head into the general. He will be able to discuss party strategy and allocation of resources and where are the best chances to flip congressional seats and where we may have missed opportunities, if Democrats are shut out of General Election ballots.



We look forward to hearing from Sergio and learning how we can best commit our time and resources to fuel a Blue Wave in November.

May Meeting Report

by Gary Boston, Rascha Hall and Ann Nye

The meeting began with the introduction and vote to accept the slate of officers for the coming year:

President: Rascha Hall

1st V.P.: Randall Klinenberg

2nd V.P.: Joseph Lopez
Recording Secretary: Kathy Bradford
Corresponding Secretary: Arline Korb
Treasurer: Al Shadbourne
Membership: Irene Silver
Publicity: Nancie Silver
Newsletter Designer: Ann Nye
Newsletter Mailings: Ron Moeller
Hospitality: Maria Frusteri
Webmaster: Reggie Jue
Past President: Lynn Bommer



From left: Irene Silver, Reggie Jue, Al Shadbourne, Arline Korb, Joseph Lopez, Randall Klinenberg, Kathy Bradford, Rascha Hall and Gary Boston

One position remains open: Newsletter Editor. If you are willing to assume the position, please contact Rascha Hall, (310) 377-7334 or Irene Silver, (310) 541-2650.

Lynn Bommer, PV Dems President, then introduced Ellen Gorbunoff, a new member of our club, who is hosting a recurring phone bank in PVE. This is one of the four phone banks that PV Dems is running. We are working with Beach Cities Democrats and South Bay Cares and call our group 'Beach Cities Flip the House'. Ellen invited volunteers to her house in Palos Verdes for a phone bank every Monday from 6:30 to 8:30pm at 2537 Via Olivera, PVE. Check our website, <http://pvpdemocrats.org/>, for the most current phone bank info.



Ellen Gorbunoff

Save the Date! July 15th @ St Luke's Presbyterian Church, 4-7pm

Join us for a 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.

Bring your own picnic dinner, or buy one from us via our web page starting mid-June. Our dinners are box lunches from Marie Calendar's, and will cost \$15 each. There will be a choice of a beef bagette, turkey club croissant, or vegetable/cheese croissant. Each dinner will come with a side salad and fruit and pie. Beer, wine and pop is complementary. We'll serve food and drink 4-5pm and then listen to the speeches.

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Candidate for Lieutenant Governor

Eleni Kounalakis, one of four democrats running for Lieutenant Governor, is a native Californian.



Eleni Kounalakis, Lt. Governor Candidate

Eleni graduated from Dartmouth College and earned her MBA from Berkeley's Haas School of Business. In 1992, Eleni started her career as a staff member of the California Democratic Party in Sacramento and worked in the historic election, which elected two women to the U.S. Senate and turned California blue.

After the election, Eleni joined her family business, AKT Development, one of California's most respected housing development firms. During her 18 years in the housing industry, Eleni continued to work as a Democratic activist, working on the campaigns of countless progressive candidates and initiatives. Passionate about early childhood development, she served on California's First 5 Commission and the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism.

In 2010, Eleni was appointed by President Barack Obama as the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary and served side-by-side President Obama and Secretary Hillary Clinton promoting democracy.

She is the author of the highly acclaimed book, *Madam Ambassador, Three Years of Diplomacy, Dinner Parties and Democracy in Budapest*, published in 2015.

Ambassador Kounalakis has been endorsed by Senator Kamala Harris, Democratic Leader

Nancy Pelosi, the California Chapter of NOW, Emily's List, Stonewall Democrats, The California League of Conservation Voters, California Federation of Teachers and dozens of Democratic Clubs from across the state.

How to Decipher the Judicial Candidates

Superior Court Judge Tom Long highlighted the judicial candidates on the ballot to help the layperson determine who best to vote for. He said we're lucky most judges don't get challenged, like himself, or we could have 170 judicial positions on the ballot every 2 years! To decide on a candidate, Tom suggests first reviewing the Los Angeles Bar Association (LACBA) ratings. Then if the candidates have the same rating, review their background and what experience they can bring to the bench. For example, experience with domestic violence and family issues is needed in the courts.



Superior Court Judge Tom Long

The LACBA rates the candidates as "Exceptionally Well Qualified," "Well Qualified," "Qualified," and "Not Qualified." At the LACBA website, <https://www.lacba.org/>, they say these ratings are based on the candidate's "character, experience, and knowledge of the law, and more." There are 11 contested races this year. Here are Tom's recommendations and the three judicial candidates who came to speak to us.

Office No. 4: Veronica Saucedo. "Well Qualified." She spoke at last month's club meeting. You can check her out in the PV Dems May Newsletter. She is endorsed by

Tom and the Los Angeles County Democratic Party (LACDP).

Office No. 16: Patricia Hunter is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP, although all three candidates are rated "Qualified."

Office No. 20: Mary Ann Escalante, the only rated "Well Qualified" candidate is endorsed by Tom. The LACDP endorsed Wendy Segall, "Qualified."

Office No. 60: Tony Cho, one of two candidates rated "Qualified" is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP.

Office No. 63: Malcolm Mackey who is the only candidate running for judicial office in this election rated "Exceptionally Well Qualified." He is overwhelmingly endorsed by almost everyone. He is 88 years old, but Tom told us that his mind is still sharp and that if he becomes unable to fulfill the office, he can be removed. His opponent is rated "Not Qualified."

Office No. 67: Maria Lucy Armendariz who is the only candidate rated "Well Qualified" is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP.

Office No. 71: Danielle Gibbons who is rated "Well Qualified" is endorsed by Tom. Her opponent is rated "Not Qualified." Ms. Gibbons spoke to us at the meeting. She is a Commissioner serving on the Domestic Violence Preventive Action Force. She works both with juveniles and with elder abuse cases.



Danielle Gibbons

Office No. 113: Javier Perez who is rated "Well Qualified" is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP. One of his opponents, Steven Schreiner, is also rated "Well Qualified," and the other opponent is rated "Qualified."

Office No. 118: David Diamond who is one of two candidates rated "Qualified" is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP.

Office No. 126: Rene Caldwell Gilbertson who is one of two candidates rated "Qualified" (the other one is rated "Not Qualified") is endorsed by Tom and the LACDP. Ms. Gilbertson spoke to us at the meeting. She is a 20 year

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resident of Palos Verdes and thought she was one of the few Democrats on the Peninsula. She serves as a Senior Deputy County Council and has worked for 24 years in juvenile law.



Rene Caldwell Gilbertson

Office No. 146: Emily Spear who is rated "Qualified" is endorsed by Tom, the L.A. Times, Progressive Democrats, and Police unions. The LACDP endorsed her opponent, Armando Duran who is also rated "Qualified." Ms Spear was represented at the meeting by **Judge Carol Najera** from Norwalk. Ms. Spear has served as a prosecutor of sexual crimes and child molestation crimes. Judge Najera, who also endorses Danielle Gibbons and Rene Gilbertson, believes that one reason that the LACDP has endorsed Ms. Spears' opponent is based on age. He is 63 and she is 36. But Judge Najera finds Ms. Gilbertson's age is a reason to endorse her. She thinks it is important to support the upcoming younger generation to carry on the ideals of older generations such as herself.



Judge Carol Najera

Update on recent CA Legislative Session

Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi joined us to discuss the legislative session in Sacramento, bills that he has been working on, as well as his re-election bid. He noted that California has passed the UK to become the world's fifth largest economy and in that regard, California was doing very well. A growing economy has left the state with a sizable "rainy day fund" surplus. However, despite a strong economy and a healthy state budget, the Assemblyman was quick to note that not all Californians were benefitting from this economic strength. His comments broadly covered work on environmental, traffic, education and criminal justice reform. The Assemblyman noted his position on the Natural Resources Committee and his bill **AB 1775** as one of the key pieces of his work to support the environment and



*Assemblyman
Al Muratsuchi*

thwart the GOP's efforts to ramp up offshore drilling off the California Coast. The bill prohibits State Lands Commission from approving any new leases, or any lease renewals, extensions, or modifications, in state waters that would result in an increase of oil or natural gas production from federal waters. This bill also prohibits the Commission from approving any lease renewal, extension, or modification – including for the construction of additional pipelines, piers, and wharves – undertaken to increase capacity for the production of oil and gas from federal waters. This bill has passed the Natural Resources Committee and is waiting on the Appropriations Committee. The Governor has indicated his support of the bill. Assemblyman Muratsuchi asked that we write to Assemblymember Fletcher, Chair of Appropriations, to express our support of this measure.

Given the presence of the refineries in the Assemblyman's district he continues to work with local activists, such as TRAA, to address safety issues, particularly the use of Modified HydroFluoric acid at the Torrance Refinery. One bill he has introduced to ban the dangerous substance has been stuck in committee due to pressure from special interest groups. He has three other bills in process to attempt to make the refineries safer.

In answering a question with regard to climate change, the Assemblyman indicated his belief that climate change is the number one existential threat to life on the planet and was proud of his co-authorship of the extension of the State's cap and trade system. While admitting that it was far from perfect, he believes that is was a good step forward. He noted that the biggest local challenge for greenhouse gas reductions are wildfire. In fact, he stated that last year's wildfires fully offset any gains on reducing greenhouse admission in the prior year.

On issue of traffic and congestion, Assemblyman Muratsuchi pointed to **SB 1**, which puts aside State funds toward the extension of the Metro Green Line from Redondo Beach to the South Bay Galleria and on to the Torrance Transit Center. The funding has been proposed as part of the [Twenty-Eight by '28 Plan](#), which proposes 28 major transits projects to be completed ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics. Governor Brown is scheduled to be in Torrance for a groundbreaking on the extension in the near future. The Assemblyman noted that SB1, "the gas tax", would be the

source of much negative political advertising during the upcoming election.

The Assemblyman highlighted the struggling California public school system as one of the many ways that all Californians are not benefitting from a strong State economy and strong fiscal position. Despite spending almost half of the state budget on education, California schools spend among the lowest in the country on a per student basis, leaving the state near the bottom in terms of education performance. He pointed to a bill he authored (**AB 2808**) as a move in the right direction, which would increase funding for local school districts to spend on local education priorities. However, the Assemblyman noted that the decline of the California school system could be tied directly to the passage of **Prop 13**, which essentially defunded education in the state to give property owners tax breaks. The Assembly admitted that Prop 13 was the "third rail" of state politics and was unlikely to be reversed, but he did see some opportunity to preserve the statue's support for homeowners but split the property tax rolls so that commercial property owners paid more equitable taxes. A proposition splitting the tax rolls will likely be on the 2020 ballot, but the specific wording is still being drafted.

In a disappointing answer to a question regarding **SB 10**, which would reform the cash bail system in the State, the Assemblyman is not yet supportive of the measure. The Palos Verdes Democrats had voted to send a letter to the Assemblyman asking for his support on this bill. While he indicated that he is supportive of the principal that suspects should not be held pre-trial on the basis of their financial abilities to come up with bail fees and collateral, he is concerned that an already underfunded judicial system cannot support another program without proper funding. He says he would need assurances of a funding source for the pre-trial screening processes and systems necessary to ensure public safety before he could support the elimination of the cash bail system.

In looking ahead to both the June Primary and the November General Election, Mr. Muratsuchi asked for our support and acknowledged that it is going to be a difficult race. If he emerges from the Primary into the General, he will likely face a Republican challenger with significant financial resources and local name recognition. Al's support of SB1 and attempts to improve safety at the Torrance refinery will also make him a target from powerful special interests.



Palos Verdes Democrats Officers for 2017-2018

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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
- Receive a monthly newsletter
- Vote on club issues, unless registered as NPP (No Party Preference)

**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 registered No Party Preference
* Fill in if Applying as a Family - two memberships I am a registered Democrat
 I am registered No Party Preference

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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