

Palos Verdes Democrats

Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

June 2017 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 25th

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: Health Care Justice in CA with SB562 Guaranteed Health Care

SPEAKER: Maureen Cruise, Director Health Care for All, Los Angeles Chapter

JULY MEETING

DATE: Sunday, July 16th

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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Save the Date! July 16th @ St Luke's Presbyterian Church

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.

Please RSVP <http://pvpdemocrats.org/event/2017-annual-membership-meeting/>

June General Meeting

On Sunday, June 25th, the Palos Verdes Democrats will meet at 2:30 pm in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Center Library to hear from Maureen Cruise on the subject of universal health care for Californians.

Maureen Cruise RN is a former clinic nurse with the LA County Dept. Health Services and is the current director of Healthcare for All- Los Angeles Chapter. A member of the Healthy California Campaign to enact SB 562, her healthcare partnerships include the All Care Alliance, Physicians for a National Health Program, National Nurses United.

Maureen volunteered with New Orleans Common Ground Clinic for Katrina Relief, and visited Venezuelan Healthcare Missions with the Global Exchange delegation to the 2006 World Social Forum.

Formerly an elected executive board member of the CA Democratic party, Ms. Cruise served as member of the state strategy healthcare team for the progressive caucus and was the Progressive Democrats of LA Healthcare Liaison.

Maureen organizes and participates in community forums, cable TV, radio and workshops to educate people about single payer universal healthcare.

May Meeting Report

by Carol Moeller

Our speaker, "**Nico**" **Rodriquez** received a graduate degree from the School of International Affairs and Public Policy at Columbia University, and went on to work for Xavier Bacerra and Barbara Boxer before becoming District Director for Ted Lieu

Rationale behind HR 1437, the No Money Bail Act introduced by Congressman Ted Lieu

Nearly 60 percent of inmates in the US are those who cannot pay bail costs (which are determined by judges) and since these people are pretrial, they have been



charged but not convicted of a crime; of those ¾ are charged with nonviolent crimes. Many of those charged with violent crimes are not eligible for bail, but those for whom bail is offered, our current bail system allows total repayment of bail if the person charged can pay the entire cost of bail and if that person shows up for their court date. For those who cannot pay, the bail bonds industry, largely exploited by insurance companies, provides bail at a cost of 10% of the amount of bail set, but this money is not reimbursed, even if the person charged is found innocent. Of those who cannot forfeit 10% of the cost of bail, the resultant pretrial detention is based solely on their inability to pay, and the price of incarceration costs state and local governments an estimated 14 billion dollars each year, not to mention the devastating effects of incarceration experienced by those charged but not convicted.

HR 1437 would prevent the allocation of Byrne Jag funds (money appropriated in 2005 to provide state aid for criminal justice) to any states who use the payment of money as a condition of incarceration, and it would prohibit the payment of money for bail in federal cases. Washington

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DC has no money required as a condition for pretrial release, and they have a 90% success rate for those who show up for trial, while Kentucky has banned the bail bond business altogether.

To underscore the bail bond issue, we viewed the Brave New Films production, **The Bail Bond Trap; American Ransom**. It states that half a million Americans are in jail annually due to the inability to pay, and 45 thousand of those are Californians. The US and the Philippines are the only countries that have a for-profit bail system, with 15 thousand employed as bail bondsmen in the US.

In addition to Ted Lieu working on this inequality issue at the Federal level, **Assemblyman Rob Bonta** and **State Senator Bob Hertzberg** introduced **AB 42**, which would prevent payment of money for bail in California.

Activist Reports

Janice Pizer (nominee for PV Dems 2nd VP) was one of roughly 10 activists from the Save Our Nation group who presented the ACLU recommendations to the Gardena Police Department. Chief Ed Medrano assured them that Gardena has had no contact with Immigration Services and only County jails interact with ICE.

Fellow Save our Nation activist **Christine Mei** contacted the Lomita Police Department and was told that another activist group had contacted them earlier and was assured that



Christine Mei, Save our Nation

they follow the ACLU guidelines such as not asking anyone their immigration status. Both ladies mentioned that a warrant is required for any ICE search and that legal status is not the responsibility of local police departments. There are plans to visit the ICE facility in Long Beach to insure they follow ACLU guidelines.

Report on the 2017 California Democratic State Convention by Reggie Jue

Ed note: This article was originally posted on the PVP Democrats website: <http://pvpdemocrats.org/2017/05/27/report-on-the-2017-california-democratic-state-convention/>

Members of the Palos Verdes Democrats were among 3,000 delegates and others gathered in Sacramento May 19 – 21, for the California Democratic Party’s annual convention. Although this is an off-election year, there were plenty of fireworks highlighted by the race to replace **John Burton** as the chair of the California Democratic Party. Burton, who has led the state party for the past eight years, is known for his colorful language, and for leading the party to dominance in the state.

Emotions were high among supporters of the two top candidates to replace Burton, **Eric Bauman** and **Kimberly Ellis**. A third candidate, **Lenore Albert-Sheridan**, also vied for the state party’s top position. In the end, Bauman, who is state party vice chair and L.A. County Party chair, achieved a razor-thin victory, winning by just 62 votes. The convention’s general session on the morning after Saturday’s vote was delayed as Ellis challenged the results, and her supporters vocalized

their displeasure with the election process.

Other highlights included speeches by **House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi**, **Senator Kamala Harris**, **L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti**, and many other state and party leaders. **Congresspersons Adam Schiff** and **Maxine Waters** and **DNC Chairman Tom Perez** also spoke, though not in the General Sessions. We also heard from the leading announced candidates for California Governor. The long list includes **Gavin Newsom**, **John Chiang**, **Antonio Villaraigosa**, and **Delaine Eastin**.

For those of us from the South Bay, the weekend started with a tour of the State Capital Building hosted by our **Assemblyman, Al Muratsuchi**. The tour included visits to the floor of both the Assembly and Senate chambers. Many of the same group met at a restaurant that evening for a reception hosted by Muratsuchi and our **State Senator, Ben Allen**. **State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon** came to thank the group for working so hard to get Al back to the Assembly.

Members of the 66th AD delegation and guests convened over dinner on Saturday at a local favorite called Frank Fat’s. The 22



South Bay representatives visiting the State Senate chambers

diners mostly represented the PV, Beach Cities, and Torrance Democratic clubs. Thanks to **PV Democrats member Connie Sullivan** for organizing the Chinese feast.

We also had a chance to chat with **Harley Rouda**, who is challenging Dana Rohrabacher in the 48th CD. He is interested in coming to speak to our club and would welcome support from PV residents, who are all too familiar with

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Rohrabacher, our Congressman until we were redistricted in 2012, so stay tuned.

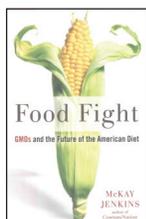
The convention ended with approval of resolutions, including one by our own **Tony Hale**. The resolutions called for, among other things, bail reform, investigation of the Russian interference on the 2016 elections, investigation/impeachment of President Trump, and support for a Single Payer Health Care system for California.

Book Review

Food Fight: GMOs and the Future of the American Diet

by McKay Jenkins

Reviewed by Ann Nye



“Are GMOs safe?” Such an innocuous question, says Jenkins, does not lead to a satisfying answer since it doesn’t account for the hundreds of millions of pounds of petrochemical insecticides (to kill bugs) and herbicides (to kill weeds) sprayed on GM crops. Whether or not genetically altered seeds themselves are benign, the chemicals that accompany them are not. The World Health Organization recently declared glyphosate, a herbicide sprayed on Monsanto’s Roundup Ready food crops around the world and long considered a relatively tame herbicide, to be a “probable human carcinogen.” The companies that sell the most GM seeds -- Monsanto, DuPont, Dow, Syngenta -- all started out as chemical companies, and their move into the seed business, has vastly expanded their capacity to sell chemical sprays

Our American diet is composed almost entirely of processed foods that are made from two plants - corn and soybeans (and canola, if your food is fried) and includes almost anything made with high-fructose corn syrup, vegetable oil, or sugar (half of which is grown from engineered sugar beets). Fully 85 percent of the feed given to cattle, hogs, and chickens is grown from genetically modified (GM) crops.

Currently, there are only four kinds of genetically engineered plants approved for agricultural use: those (like Roundup Ready soybeans) that tolerate the herbicides farmers use to kill weeds; those (like Bt corn) that are

engineered to produce their own insecticide; those (like Plenish soybeans) made with altered nutritional components, like healthier fatty acids; and those (like most papaya grown in Hawaii) that have built in virus resistance. Many other potential applications are in various stages of development.

It is true that farmers sprayed all kinds of chemicals on their crops long before the development of GMOs. Consider wheat, which is not (currently) genetically engineered. Wheat is often sprayed with glyphosate as a desiccant immediately before it is harvested, in order to force the plants to rapidly release their seeds. This puts a concentrated chemical on the plant right before it’s processed into food. Some scientists wonder whether the rash of gluten intolerance currently afflicting the nation is actually Roundup intolerance.

Thus, Jenkins says, the question is not “the safety of GMOs”; it is a question of “the safety of what we spray on our food,” a whole lot of which is GM.”

In other words, Jenkin says, “Do you really care only that a food was genetically engineered? Or would you also like to know that it was sprayed with a herbicide that is known to be carcinogenic to humans, or with another chemical known to destroy the plants that monarch butterflies need to survive? That it was sprayed with an insecticide known to kill bees? That it was grown in a monoculture field that is destroying biodiversity generally, or is polluting drinking water supplies?”

That is what the people of Hawaii want to know. In Kauai, multinational agrochemical companies have for years kept secret their use of pesticides from the local people as they developed the GM seeds that circulate around the world. It’s suppose to be against the law to spray restricted-use pesticides in windy conditions (over 10 mph) and on Kauai, it’s always windy. When Kauai County Councilmember Hooser finally got to look at the list of restricted-use pesticide sales from the state Department of Agriculture, he found “98 percent of the restricted-use pesticides were being used by just 4 companies.” Recent hair testing of Kauai children found they were exposed to 39 different pesticides, including 8 restricted-use pesticides. This fueled the anti-GMO fight, but even though the people won the vote to ban GMO’s, the courts ruled county law could not override state and federal law. The

same fight was repeated on Maui, where the people won the vote, but the courts stepped in to override the vote.

In Salina, Kansas, resides the Land Institute (started in 1976) headed by Wes Jackson, with a vision to change the face of American farming. Jackson said, “This GMO thing prevents real thought. It’s worse than a digression. It’s a distraction. We are really interested in social justice and reducing greenhouse gases and reducing poverty. How do we meet a bonafide human need - like reducing poverty as we reduce fossil fuel use - how do we meet that need in a way that goes beyond GMOs?”

Stan Cox, a plant breeder at The Land Institute, feels the use of GMO technology is abetting the destructive form of industrial farming. Even if we got rid of GMOs, we still have all the problems caused by large-scale farming. “It’s not the technology that causes the real problems. It’s the system.”

To reduce their carbon footprint, small scale farmers Jennie and Hans Schmidt near the Eastern Shore of Maryland, “sustainably” farm 2000 acres; growing tomatoes for canneries, GM corn and soybeans to Perdue chickens, and soft red wheat for crackers and pretzel processors in Pennsylvania. The Schmidt’s leave withered plants to serve as “green manure” on their fields, which reduces their carbon footprint by not tilling their soil.

Brian Synder, head of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, “wonders whether produce grown by farmers like Jennie Schmidt and Steve Groff might be given its own label: not “GMO” or “organic,” but “sustainable.” Marketing food as “sustainable” would reward farmers for preserving topsoil, for example, or building soil quality through the use of nitrogen fixers, cover crops, or composting - even if they use GM seeds.”

Instead of “sustainable,” Leu and Cummins would like to see foods affixed with one of two labels: “degenerative” or “regenerative.” “Consumers could then choose food produced by chemical-intensive, monoculture-based industrial systems that “destabilize the climate, and degrade soil, water, biodiversity, health and local economies. Or they could choose food produce using organic regenerative practices that rejuvenate the soil, grasslands, and forests; replenish water; promote food sovereignty; and restore public health and prosperity.”



Palos Verdes Democrats Officers for 2016-2017

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- 1st Vice President: Kathy Bradford 310-265-9812
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Dee Dee Gonzalez 210-367-9727
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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
 I am registered No Party Preference
 Name* _____ I am a registered Democrat
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Residence Address _____ Phone _____
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*Select One: Individual: \$ 25.00/Year Family Membership \$40.00/Year
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