

Palos Verdes Peninsula
Democratic Club
Founded 1952



logo by
Paul Conrad

September 2013 Newsletter

P.O. Box 2234, Rolling Hills Est. CA 90274
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"One of the oldest Democratic Clubs in California"

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

DATE: September 15, 2013

TIME: 2:30-4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Peninsula Center Library
701 Silver Spur Road, RHE

TOPIC: Voting Rights

SPEAKER: Brad Friedman

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: October 20, 2013

TIME: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Pacific Unitarian Church
5621 Montemalaga Dr, RPV

TOPIC: Commentary on Washington DC

SPEAKER: Karl Frisch

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September Meeting – Brad Friedman to Speak on Voting and Voting Rights

You may have heard him on his KPFK weekly BradCast, or on Randi Rhodes' show, or any number of shows. When they want an expert on voting and voting rights, they call Brad.

The Commonweal Institute describes Brad as "an award-winning investigative journalist/blogger, political commentator, broadcaster and the creator/publisher of The BRAD BLOG. He's also producer and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio feature, "Green News Report", and a frequent contributor to Huffington Post, Guardian (UK), ComputerWorld and elsewhere. His investigative coverage and expertise on issues of Election Integrity have earned him invitations to address the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) in D.C. and other governmental and non-governmental organizations..."

His chapter on the illegal certification of e-voting machines in Nevada in 2004 (with Michael Richardson) was included in Mark Crispin Miller's 2008 book *Loser Take All*, and another, on Election 2008, was penned for Project Censored's 2009 book. Brad is also co-founder of the non-partisan watchdog organization VelvetRevolution.us.

Please join us on September 15 at 2:30 pm in the Peninsula Center Library to hear what Brad has to say. Will be an interesting program.

August Meeting Report By Connie Sullivan



*Kathy Santarosa, President of the Palos Verdes
Faculty Association*

Kathy Santarosa, PV Faculty Association President--Teacher Evaluations

BACKGROUND: In recent years, teacher evaluations have become a significant issue. The Los Angeles Times has been reporting on teacher evaluations and promoting the notion that teacher evaluations should be based upon student achievement test scores.

Specifically, a method known as "value added" student achievement test scores, whereby the students' scores for the current year are compared to the same students' scores for the prior year. If the scores go down, that should affect the teacher's evaluation negatively and if they go up, that should affect the teacher's evaluation positively.

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Kathy Santarosa was asked to speak about teacher evaluations in general and specifically about the proposed value added method.

Kathy provided information about current evaluation methods:

- Permanent teachers are evaluated at least every other year.
- Permanent teachers with at least ten years in service and whose previous evaluations meet or exceed district standards can be evaluated once every five years.
- Teachers are informed by October 15 that they are to be evaluated in the current school year.
- The teacher’s principal or his/her designee serves as evaluator and writes the final written evaluation.
- The teacher and the evaluator meet by November 1 to develop the teacher’s goals for the school year.
- A teacher with an overall “unsatisfactory” rating at the end of the year will not receive the salary step increase for the upcoming year.

Kathy described one of her goals was to research the relationship of homework in her middle school science classes to test results. She compared test grades of students who had done their homework assignments with those who had been lax in completing their assignments and found no correlation between doing the homework regularly and test grades.

Kathy is not opposed to value added student scores as part of the evaluation, but pointed out that not all students are tested every year, so that would increase the complexity of using scores in teacher evaluations. Also, she is opposed to making value added scores public.

Lori Yuan – Adelanto Parent Activist

BACKGROUND: Governor Schwarzenegger signed the parent trigger bill into law in California in 2010. Parent Revolution, a nonprofit organization lobbies state legislatures to pass these laws. The Walton Family Foundation is the largest funder of Parent Revolution.



Lori Yuan describes her experience at Desert Hills Elementary School



Diane Wallace explaining Common Core

Parents at a failing school (as determined by test scores) circulate a petition to change the administration of their school. If 50% + 1 of parents sign the petition, the “trigger” has been “pulled”. Only the parents who sign the petition can decide one of four fates for the school – remove the principal, remove the principal and all the teachers, close the school, or bring in a charter operator.

Lori Yuan had two children attending Desert Hills Elementary School, a failing school in Adelanto, CA. Parent Revolution contacted some parents to start a petition drive at their school. According to Yuan deceptive and harassing techniques were used – parents were told the school would get new computers, or upgraded play equipment, or etc. Also, petitioners repeatedly went back to parents until they signed.

When Yuan found deceptive techniques had been used and told signers exactly what was planned for the school, many wanted to rescind their signatures, but a judge ruled they could not do so.

Only 53 of the petition signers actually voted on the motion to bring in a charter operator. The charter school opened this month. The teachers at the new school are not unionized.

Diane Wallace, Professor of Education – Common Core Curriculum

BACKGROUND: The Common Core Curriculum is an idea developed by the National Governors Association. American students were falling behind other countries and US companies were finding American graduates to be poorly prepared 21st Century workers. Forty-five states committed to implementing the new standards. California is beginning implementation this school year.

Diane Wallace began by covering the recent history of education-related federal legislation, starting with the 1960’s era Elementary and Secondary Education Act, through the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. This Bush-era program set up rigid standards that, with each succeeding year made it harder for a school to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress and eventually every school would be designated in need of improvement.

Then Diane explained the Common Core State Standards are designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and career in the 21st Century.

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**Resolution Opposing Proposed Hermosa Beach Oil Drilling Project
By Connie Sullivan**

Dency Nelson, club member and vice president of the Beach Cities Democratic Club brought the following resolution to our general membership meeting on August 18. At our board meeting on August 21, we decided to bring it before our membership for adoption at our next meeting on September 15. We print it here for your consideration before the meeting.

OPPOSING PROPOSED HERMOSA BEACH OIL DRILLING PROJECT

WHEREAS, the City of Hermosa Beach is considering a proposal to directional drill from its City Yard up to 34 wells underneath the city's homes, streets and businesses and into the Torrance Oil Field underneath Santa Monica Bay; and

**WHEREAS, it has been determined that there will be probable negative effects on the health, safety and lifestyles of the citizens of Hermosa Beach and its neighboring communities due to this proposed drilling, and that this project is inconsistent with the city's pledge to become carbon neutral; and
WHEREAS, Democratic values recognize the scientific reality of Climate Change and the negative effects on the planet from mining and burning fossil fuels;**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club opposes the proposed Hermosa Beach Oil Drilling Project and any future oil drilling in Hermosa Beach; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club strongly supports the City of Hermosa Beach's pledge to become a carbon neutral city and to promote an alternative carbon neutral economy for the city.

The curriculum will be narrower and deeper than in the past. Students will no longer be required to memorize large amounts of factual information, but will become proficient in understanding information. There will be less

individualized learning and more group learning. Students will develop knowledge along with collaborative skills.

Specialized testing is being developed to correspond with the new standards and will be administered by computer.

**L.A. County Party Fundraising Dinner Set for Oct. 20
by Kay Cooperman Jue**

Club members are encouraged to attend the 2013 Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner, the L.A. County Democratic Party's main fundraiser of the year.

In addition to supporting the work the county party does for Democratic candidates, attendees will help celebrate an honor to be bestowed on our club president, Connie Sullivan. Connie has been selected as this year's woman Democrat of the Year for the 66th Assembly District, which includes PVP.

In recognition of Connie's award, our club's board has approved a \$30-per-ticket subsidy for 10 members who would like to attend the event. The dinner is scheduled for the evening of Sunday, Oct. 20, following our club's monthly membership meeting. At press time, the dinner location had yet to be announced, although we hear it will be either in the LAX area or in Long Beach.

Dinner tickets are \$110 per person if purchased by Sept. 23 and \$125 after. The \$30-per-ticket subsidy will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Kay Cooperman Jue if you are interested in attending. She can be reached at pvedem@yahoo.com or (310) 377-3512.

**Harold Williams to Run for West Basin Water District Board
By Connie Sullivan**

Club member Harold Williams announced at our August 18 general membership meeting that he will run for West Basin Water District Board member.

Harold is a former Carson City Council member and a Los Angeles County Democratic Party Central Committee member, in addition to being a valued member of our club. He is also an engineer.

The election is next year and we don't yet know who might be running against Harold, but we will let you know as soon as we do.

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 Founded 1952

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Palos Verdes Peninsula Democratic Club

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

www.pvpdemocrats.org

As a member of
 the PVP
 Democratic Club,
 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
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 I might offer my home for a meeting or social event