P.O. Box 2192, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

March, 2013

Next Meeting

Manhattan Bread & Bagel 1808 N. Sepulveda Boulevard Manhattan Beach Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Featured program

Public Education in the South Bay

President's Message

The program at our meeting this month will focus on public education. Support for public education is part of the platform of the Democratic Party. I hope you will join us for the presentation and discussion.

I confess that my heart and soul are in our public education system. I have been a career educator and truly believe that our education system provides the foundation for democracy.

In my career I have been a teacher, project coordinator, principal and district administrator. I also served on the leadership team for a statewide early literacy project that was implemented in 24 low performing school districts around the state. For the past 10 years my efforts have focused on low performing schools and school districts and the improved student achievement and school performance. All of my work has been outside the South Bay. Currently I teach graduate courses in education research at National University.

Before our meeting, it occurred to me that it might be beneficial to share some information about current issues in public education.

There is a general misunderstanding about public schools. The belief is that the schools in middle and upper income neighborhoods are better than the

schools in poor neighborhoods. While that might have been true at one time, great progress has been made – and it should be made. There are now many schools in poor neighborhoods that perform as well as the schools in the South Bay. All students and parents should know that the students are getting a good education in all schools. It's in their best interest – and in the best interest of our communities, state and nation. In my work, I have visited many high performing inner city schools!

One of the efforts to assure equal access to a quality education is the establishment of a basic or common core of academic standards for all students in all schools – each grade level and subject. "Common core standards" is the term that refers to this effort. Textbooks are being re-written to include these standards.

The funding for public schools in CA was changed with Prop 13. School districts now rely on the state for the basic funding of the district – and receive some additional funding from the federal government to provide programs for special needs students. Most recently, the economic downturn of the nation's and state's financial condition has impacted the funding to our local districts. They have balanced their budgets in a variety of ways.

Charter schools are often mentioned in the news. These are public schools that are designed for areas in which students are underserved – predominantly low income areas. They are not intended for areas like the South Bay. The research has shown that some have been effective and some have not.

Another effort to improve student

achievement is the concept of extending learning beyond the classroom through the use of technology. For example, textbooks and lessons are now available on iPads. Imagine taking a science class in high school and going home to do your homework. If you don't understand something, you can now go online to read or watch a video that will help you understand your assignment. In some classes, students are assigned to watch a presentation at home – online – and then they return to class the next day to participate in a discussion or project. This is very different from the way things were when we were in school and it's an exciting innovation in our public education system.

Hopefully, we will discuss these and many more interesting things about our public education system at our meeting this month.

Happy Spring! Diane Wallace



We enjoyed a big crowd at our February meeting which featured the Power Plant and the Ballona Wetlands issues

February Recap

Minutes provided courtesy of Kathryn Campbell and Lisa Power Club President Diane Wallace opened the meeting at Manhattan Bread and Bagel Café at 7:30 PM and welcomed members, guests and new members. Diane asked for a moment of silence in honor of Steve Zucker.

Minutes of the January 23rd meeting were approved. Minutes of the November 28th meeting were amended to reflect corrected financial information; they were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report

NOTE: Effective January 2013, all financial reporting is being done on a calendar-month basis. Previously, reports were current up to the date of the monthly Club meeting. This change synchronizes all of the financial reporting that is required to State and Federal.

Although Treasurer Edna Murphy included the *January* financials in her report on January 23, she presented the full month of January data again at the February meeting. The financial data reporting is now up to date and in sync with State and Federal reporting. Going forward, reports will be for the *previous full month's* credits and debits.

Renewals / New Members \$ 65 **Holiday Dinner Payments** 642 Drinks, Auction 9 Dinners via ActBlue 115 Total \$831 Holiday Party (\$1,403)(300)DAC Total (\$1,703)Ending Balance is \$1455 as of

1/31/2013.

State Account

Starting Balance \$28 \$15 deducted from State account for Bank Charges.

Current Balance: \$13.

Membership Report

Lori Geittmann met with a consultant about doing email outreach within the 66th. They ran a test and would like to run a larger program. Motion passed.

Our Local Environmental Issues Ballona Wetlands – Marcia Hanscom, Director of the Ballona Institute

A resolution is being circulated regarding preservation of the Ballona Wetlands. The area has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. More than 100 acres have been preserved. Bill Rosendahl has been a supporter of restoration without heavy equipment/dredging. Multiple birds and plants flourish there.

Marcia views the planned Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project to be a "massively engineered habitat alteration plan" that would greatly disrupt the area. The Annenberg Foundation's proposal includes building a 46,000-square-foot interpretive center. It would impact nesting birds including Great Blue Herons, Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers and the White-tailed Kite, among many others. The plans would remove much of the uplands area and build on it. She supports an alternative plan, the "Wildlife-friendly Restoration Alternative," which would acquire more land and rely on community-involved restoration. Marcia says that Bradford and Waxman are still reviewing the issue.

Dency mentioned that Surfrider Foundation has not taken a position on this yet, and he asked them to attend tonight's meeting and provide their opinion. Joe Geever said that he worked with Marcia to protect the wetlands, but that perhaps they lacked a clear long term vision for the area at the time. He said that there are now diverging visions for the area, and Surfrider is still looking at the benefits of different potential solutions. He agreed that the "Restoration" project is not really restoration. At this point they feel that the concerns are legitimate, but they can't take a position given the diversity of views. They are trying to engage an expert in wetland ecosystems to evaluate the competing plans and provide an objective point of view. He suggested that we not rush to judgment but seek alternative opinions before making a decision.

Dency asked Hermosa Beach Mayor Jeff Duclos, who is an alternate on the Coastal Commission, to comment as well. Jeff feels that it is premature to take a position on this issue without hearing other points of view.

After further discussion on both sides, Dency proposed a Ballona Wetlands resolution.

LAX, Options for Modernization Sheila Michelson

Sheila Michelson, president of the Westchester Democratic Club, explained two options, Alternative 1 and 2. Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) management on February 5 decided to support a plan called "Alternative 1." Sheila's group does not agree. They, Bill Rosendahl, Maxine Waters, Jan Perry and Mike Bonin support a plan called "Alternative 2." They do not wish to see the north airfield runways moved 260 feet north, as per Alternative 1. Sheila asked that BCDC support Alt 2 (Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

and that we each sign the online petition at www.modernlax.com. Jim Oulette provided additional details in support of Alt 1, such as the fact that Alt. 1 will require rerouting Lincoln Boulevard. He feels that the safety improvements will be small relative to the cost and impact. He also feels that the real justification for Alt 1 is that it will increase LAX's capacity, rather than improving safety. They also mentioned Alt 9, which provides transportation improvements related to the airport. Read their points in detail at www.modernlax.com.

Resolutions

Restoration of the Ballona Wetlands: Dency Nelson

Dency proposed a resolution for the LA County Democratic Party to call for more transparency in the process and preventing the use of public lands by an outside non-profit or commercial organization. Motion made to support the "spirit" and language of the resolution provided, but that it be rewritten into the proper format, since Tony Hale and Lori Geittmann did not feel that it was in the proper format to be submitted as is. Motion carried unanimously.

LAX Modernization
Dency made a motion that we support
Alts 2 & 9 and reject Alt 1 for the
modernization of LAX. Motion carried
unanimously.

Carolyn Waters asked for a resolution in support of Measure A in Redondo Beach. Lori Geittmann arqued against Measure A as she says that we don't have the money to pay for a park. Also, she said that AES will sue the city because the rezoning will reduce the value of their property. We can't afford lawsuits when our city employees have been taking pay cuts. Varo argued in favor of Measure A, saying the money will come from the future commercial development. Todd Loewenstein, member of school board in Redondo Beach, also supports the measure. He feels the power plant is dangerous for kids due to the anticipated

15 times increase in particulate emissions. He mentioned the recent endorsement by the Daily Breeze, which is normally very conservative. And that the property and other taxes brought in by new commercial development will offset any costs.

Jeff Duclos mentioned the major, long lasting impact of a lawsuit that Hermosa Beach faced, although he would prefer not to have the power plant there. He suggests attempting future negotiation based on new Obama administration quidance to the EPA. Carolyn's motion in support of Measure A passed. 66th ADDC – Approval and Membership Elections for Club representatives will be held on May 22nd at our regularly scheduled Club meeting. Nominee submissions for co-chairs will be made at the April meeting (April 24); brief candidate statements can be submitted to Moira Zucker by May 8th for inclusion to the monthly Newsletter and prior to the election.

Our first full ADDC meeting will be the Thursday after the CA State Convention, April 18th. We'll send out details as we determine a location, but please pencil in the date. All ADDC members are invited and encouraged to attend. Membership dues are \$20 for an individual; \$30 per counter.

A 66th ADDC Dinner will be held in

Sacramento on Saturday April 13th at Frank Fats restaurant. We will set up online advance payment via Act Blue shortly and notify members of all the AD clubs when they can secure their reservations.





Speakers at our February meeting; Top, Jim Oulette; Below, Marcia Hanscom of Ballona Wetlands Institute

Prosecute REAL Voter Fraud!

Republicans in States where they control both the Legislature (often through gerrymandering, like in the lower House of Congress) and the Governor's mansion have taken to repressing the vote of groups that tend to vote Democratic, like racial minorities, Hispanics, the elderly and the poor. This was a stated goal of many Republican leaders during the 2012 election, and it resulted in millions of Americans being denied their right to vote.

This is, of course, old news to California voters where the ultra-right wing has controlled the Republican Party for over half a century. We have seen voter

repression in places like Orange County, where for decades in the latter half of the 20th century right-wing groups did things like set up police road-blocks near polling places in minority neighborhoods to discourage citizens there from voting, tell voters that they should vote a day or two after the election, send out phony "Democratic" slate mailers endorsing Republicans in close races, throw away voter registration forms of people they registered as Democratic or change their registration to Republican, etc. etc. Then there were more insidious ways to repress the vote like creating a shortage of ballots in Democratic precincts, or fewer voting machines than in Republican-

(Continued on page 4)

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> Beach Cities Democratic Club



(Continued from page 3)

majority precincts, or combining precincts, making voting places more distant, all intended to make voting queues longer. In 1996 electronic voting machines with proprietary, "trade secret" software appeared, usually with no paper trail, and vote tabulating was done inside computers with no visible means of observing the vote count process. The vendors of these voting machines have been shown to lie about the process, and on one occasion even promised to deliver a State's electoral votes to one Presidential candidate. Computer experts have shown repeatedly that electronic voting results can be easily manipulated in seconds by a single person, and there is ample evidence that elections have been manipulated in that way. Always in favor of Republicans, it seems.

The Federal government seems to do nothing to investigate, never mind prosecute, such widespread voting fraud. Nor has Congress put any teeth in election fraud laws.

We all have to thank "Anonymous" for preventing Karl Rove's minions from stealing the 2012 election by computer fraud and installing President Romney! Rove only had to change the vote counts in three States. No one would have been the wiser. Just like 2000 and 2004.

Watch the old HBO documentary "Hacking Democracy" (it's streaming on Hulu right now) to see how elections have been and can be manipulated, from the local level on up. Notice how the workers in the Elections Departments treat signed precinct vote count data, which any investigation would use as evidence of voting fraud, like it's a joke while they are attempting to destroy it. Or the Elections Supervisor pre-choosing three "random" precincts, presumably precincts that she knew weren't manipulated during the election, that she and her staff had already pre-sorted and pre-counted. How many seconds would "evidence" like that stand in a trial?

If anyone prevents a single citizen of the United States of America from voting,

that is just as much voter fraud as, say, someone claiming to live in an unfinished room in his son's basement and voting from that address while actually living in another State. Both should be subject to the same \$10,000 fine and five years in jail! And whatever else felons are due. For each occurrence! And every person complicit in that crime, be they legislators or chiefs of police or janitors, should be subject to the same penalties!

This is voter fraud that affects all 300 million citizens of the USA. It totally distorts what Democracy is. How can we proselytize Democracy when we don't practice it here? Democracy is not a joke, despite what Republicans think. Every American is equal. Every American has the right and should have an equal ability to vote.

Jim McGreevy