

Beach Cities Democratic Club



January, 2010

Next Meeting

Manhattan Bread and Bagel
1808 North Sepulveda Boulevard
Manhattan Beach
Wednesday, January 27
7:30 PM

We have a very special speaker this month. Janice Martin, director of programs and volunteers for Habitat for Humanity of Los Angeles, will bring us up to date on the building projects initiated by Habitat. She also has a wealth of information on the housing situation in the Los Angeles area. As you know, Habitat corrals volunteers to build houses for low income families who also contribute "sweat equity" to the project.

President Jimmy Carter is well-known for his work for this group. Ms. Martin is looking for volunteers to help build but also she is looking for persons who can volunteer time in the Habitat office at 177th Street and Figueroa in Gardena.

BEACH CITIES GREEN

BY DENCY NELSON

Happy New Year, Beach Cities Democrats! I hope that the holidays were good to you and that 2010 is off to a good start.



What is definitely germinating in this new year is a lot of negative misinformation about electric vehicles. We presume that it is being disseminated in anticipation of the many new electric vehicles scheduled to appear in showrooms and on our roadways, from automobile manufacturers large and small, over the next two or three years, which the status quo guys just can't stand to see happen! So as an owner/driver of a fully electric, freeway-capable Toyota RAV4EV for eight years and almost 100,000 miles, and as a

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Our January Celebration

Our holiday party this year exceeded all expectations! BCDC joined up with the 53rd AD for a fabulous potluck at Ray and Carol Waters's home on January 9. You'd think everybody would be done with celebrating; on the contrary, guests brought great entrees, salads, and desserts; there was a wine bar on the patio (with good weather to accommodate); and it was a nice touch *not* to worry about holiday obligations.

Speakers included Senator Jenny Oropesa on the trials and tribulations of the Legislature, Ted Lieu on his campaign for Attorney General, Jeff DuClos to thank us for supporting his successful bid for Hermosa Beach City Council, and our own Ray Waters, now on the Hermosa School Board. Tony Hale thanked all the year's volunteers.



Visit our Website at lafn.org/politics/bcdc

founding member of Plug In America, I want to paraphrase for you, courtesy of Plug In America, the first six of “The Top 12 Plug-in Electric Vehicle Myths”:

1. MYTH: EVs don’t have enough range.

FACT: Americans, like me, drive an average of 40 miles per day. Most new EVs have a range of at least double that and can be charged at any ordinary electrical outlet. With fast chargers at public charging stations, an EV can acquire 120 miles of range in a matter of minutes – almost like pulling up to a gas pump and filling the tank.

2. MYTH: EVs are good for short city trips only.

FACT: Consumers like me have owned and driven EVs for seven years or more and regularly use them for trips of up to 120 miles. I have used my EV exclusively for all of my daily commuting from Hermosa Beach to all over the Los Angeles and Orange County region for almost eight years.

3. MYTH: EVs just replace the tailpipe with a smokestack.

FACT: Even today, with a little over half of the electricity in America coming from coal-fired plants, it is still far cleaner to scrub the emissions from those coal-fired chimneys at the source than to capture them from conventional gas or hybrid vehicle tailpipes. The beauty of the electric vehicle is that it can be fueled from a completely clean and green grid of electricity coming from the wind and the sun. I’ve been charging my car from my rooftop solar panels for all eight years that I have been driving it.

4. MYTH: The charging infrastructure must be built before people will adopt EVs.

FACT: Most charging will be done at home, so a public charging infrastructure isn’t a prerequisite. For the eight years I have been driving my car, 90% of my charging has been done at home, overnight, while I’ve been sleeping.

5. MYTH: The grid will crash if millions of plug-ins charge at once.

FACT: Most charging will be done off-peak, overnight, and off-peak electricity production and transmission capacity are sufficient to fuel the daily commutes of

three-quarters of all cars, light trucks, SUVs, and vans on the road today if they were plug-in vehicles. Utilities are upgrading some local distribution systems to accommodate plug-ins, just as they do when residents add more air conditioners and TVs. In fact, with vehicle-to-grid strategies, plug-in vehicles can actually become energy-storage devices on wheels, which would benefit the grid rather than overloading it.

6. MYTH: Battery chemicals are bad for the environment and can’t be recycled.

FACT: According to the EPA, 99% of batteries in conventional cars are recycled. The metals in the newer batteries are more valuable, and recycling programs are already developed for them. In addition, utilities plan to use batteries for energy storage once they are no longer viable in a vehicle.

Myths 7 through 12 will be presented and debunked here next month. In the meantime, visit www.PlugInAmerica.org for the complete list and for everything you’d ever want to know about plug-in electric vehicles.

Health Reform and History

BY LEE FINK

In the summer of 1787, George Washington was not only the most popular man in America, but the singular national figure of the new nation. Already considered the Father of Our Country, he had twice already turned down the opportunity to become a virtual king. That summer, he presided over a convention of 55 delegates from 12 states who convened in Philadelphia to write a new charter of government. The new document was terribly flawed: it created an unwieldy two-house legislative branch where in the upper house even tiny Rhode Island, that had not even sent delegates to Philadelphia, had the same power as Washington’s Virginia, the largest state in the new union; despite the founders’ promise that all men were created equal, it protected the institution of slavery and forced citizens of free states to return fugitive slaves; worst of all, it failed to set forth protection for the basic rights such as

free speech and due process for which the country had just fought a Revolution.

Despite Washington’s support, fierce battles were waged over its ratification—opposing delegates were physically dragged into state conventions to create a quorum. Washington’s top supporters were forced to give in to opponents’ demands and promise that one of the first items the new Congress would take up would be proposed amendments. Despite its flaws, the US Constitution would become the most important legal document in human history. Revered by Americans, it has been imitated the world over. It has inspired millions of people to travel here from distant shores to seek the freedoms it guarantees, and millions of others to rise up to oppose the tyrants who would deny them those freedoms.

By 1862, Abraham Lincoln had won the presidency based on his record as one of the most eloquent anti-slavery spokesmen, having famously declared that the nation could not exist “half slave

and half free.” While Lincoln had not achieved a large mandate in the 1860 election, more than half of his Democratic opponents had resigned their seats in Congress when the South attempted to secede, leaving Republicans and Unionists nearly a 3-1 advantage in both houses of Congress. Lincoln’s power was not limited to Congressional majorities: at the height of the Civil War, he used his authority as Commander-in-Chief to strip rebels of land, quell draft riots, and suspend habeas corpus.

Lincoln faced tremendous pressure from progressives to permanently end slavery, while trying to placate war-weary moderates willing to give in to the South’s demands in order to end the conflict. In September, Lincoln issued a proclamation that earned him the enmity of both his right and left. While purporting to free the slaves, the order excluded Union states and areas under Northern military control. In short, Lincoln freed all the slaves he had no power to help, and helped none of the slaves he had the

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November Recap

Tony Hale led our final meeting of the year, featuring representatives from the offices of Jane Harman and Ted Lieu, E board reports, and an excellent presentation on the upcoming water shortage.

First, Rebecca Kim told us that Jane Harman has concerns with the health care bills and does not want to see an increase in illegal abortions. She mentioned an upcoming MoveOn demonstration on health care.

Irving Pacheco from Ted Lieu's office reported on Ted's campaign for Attorney General. He has been endorsed by numerous officials including Sherriff Lee Baca, John Chiang, Assembly-member Bonnie Lowenthal and others.

Tony Hale reported from the E Board meeting and spoke about AB 32, the state's landmark anti-global warming law. Governor Schwarzenegger, citing California's 12.5 percent unemployment rate, has threatened to veto the bill which would force Californians to use cleaner but costlier sources of energy unless it included a provision allowing for its suspension in an emergency.

Our Democratic Lt. Gov. John Garamendi was to be sworn into Congress after beating four other candidates in a special election to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek. Tauscher was appointed Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Tony also said that the state Party has worked out a deal with Political Data to provide voter information and generate walk lists and other organizing tools. Their goal is to have a common database for California. He mentioned the California Democratic Party's Pre-Endorsement Conferences in March. The Conferences determine which candidates the state Party endorses for Assembly, Senate and Congress. Each chartered club receives one representative for every 20 members registered to vote in a specific Assembly District.

All chartered organization rosters and potential representatives must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Director by December 31, 2009.

Our featured presentation was by Ron Wildemuth, the public and governmental affairs manager of the West Basin Municipal Water District. They are the area water wholesaler from Malibu to Carson, buying water from the Metropolitan Water District and providing it to eight retail agencies. *Editor's note: West Basin recently celebrated a new recycled water conversion with the Manhattan Beach City Council and the Manhattan Beach Marriott - the first golf course to use recycled water on its greens.*

Wildemuth said that Southern California's water system is outdated; built in the 1970s to serve 18 million people, it now serves 37 million and growing. The water supply that comes from the San Joaquin Bay Delta could be jeopardized by an earthquake, and our other source, the Colorado River, is over-allocated. Longer droughts, decreased snow pack, and population growth make it mandatory for the state to modify our water system.

While there are no quick solutions, West Basin launched an initiative to increase the dependability of our water supply. The Water Reliability 2020 Program will extend recycled water pipelines, double conservation, expand education programs, and develop ocean-water desalination. MWD deserves credit for looking ahead, buying groundwater space and helping alleviate the impact of the current drought.

Wildemuth talked about water treatment and purification, explaining that what matters is the purification, not the source, of water. West Basin produces five different types of water *from* sewer water, including ultra pure—better than bottled water. If this sounds disconcerting, he pointed out that any city downstream from another city already consumes that city's processed sewer water.

West Basin's conservation measures

include rebate incentives, plumbing retrofits, and education to encourage consumers to reduce their lawns, plant drought-resistant gardens, and recycle water. Ideally, ten percent of our water should come from desalination.

West Basin has a temporary ocean-water desalination facility at the SeaLab in Redondo Beach to test safe practices and their goals is to produce 20 million gallons a day.

Wildemuth's comments suggested that we may come to regard sewer water with less aversion because it forms such an important source for our pure water. The Colorado Rives is becoming more and more salty, sometimes exceeding ocean water levels. For more information about West Basin Water and Reliability 2020, go to www.westbasinwater.org.

Tony said that in northern California, ratepayers are investing millions to develop new groundwater wells, recycle and re-use treated wastewater, storm water and gray water and build a pilot desalination plant.

Carol Waters reported from the County Committee that there was a resolution to restore the Glass Steagall Act. She said there was a good program on our military veterans, with Tim Goodrich attending.

In closing, one of the attendees spoke up in support of Building a Better Redondo, an organization that promotes the slow-growth initiative Measure DD that was passed in 2008. The measure requires a public vote on major land-use changes, and BBR is against proposed rezoning of the Harbor area. Among those supporting the effort is City Councilman Bill Brand, who won his Council seat in March. Brand contends that the harbor zoning map requires a citywide vote. There are divergent views among members about this issue. Tony proposed we table it and investigate further in the new year.



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Beach Cities
Democratic Club



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power to actually free. And yet today, his moniker as the Great Emancipator is based on signing that document. While the Emancipation Proclamation had very little practical effect in its time, it laid the groundwork for ending the plague of slavery and setting the country on course to live up to its beliefs that “all men are created equal.”

By 1935, Franklin Roosevelt had been elected to the Presidency by a landslide of 17 points, and was on his way to winning the 1936 election by the most lopsided electoral majority since James Monroe ran unopposed. In 1932, he had managed to sweep in a Democratic Congress of 311 Representatives and a 60-36 advantage in the Senate, only to pick up 11 seats in each house in the mid-term elections. By 1936, Democrats and their allies would hold a 79-17 advantage in the Senate, while the Republican Party was reduced to only 88 seats of 435 in the House. Roosevelt had popularity unrivaled since Washington and political power unknown to any President before or since.

In August 1935, Roosevelt signed a

law that would provide retirement benefits to seniors. Derided by Roosevelt’s political opponents as socialism and despite his unmatched popularity, Roosevelt’s bill was badly flawed. Benefits were only available to workers over 65, even though the average life expectancy at the time was 61.7. The law also excluded a host of professions so that half of employed women were ineligible for benefits, as were two-thirds of African-Americans. For those who did qualify, the meager benefits barely provided enough to survive. And FDR’s bill excluded the national health care for which his cousin Theodore Roosevelt had advocated even for the elderly.

Today, the Social Security Act of 1935 is regarded as the most progressive piece of legislation in American history. It has saved tens of millions of seniors from abject poverty and been the basis of a secure retirement for hundreds of millions of Americans. In the 1960s, it was finally expanded to provide health care for seniors, which now covers more than 40 million Americans.

Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt have rightly been lionized for pushing

forward massive public reforms. But their reforms were all flawed—compromises made despite the fact that they each held huge political power. But no one would criticize them for moving the nation forward. In time, each of their reforms would prove to be path-breaking, and over time, their accomplishments would be central to the America we have today.

Naturally, there is a lesson to be learned from history. Great reforms often have flawed beginnings. But if the Constitution, Emancipation Proclamation, and Social Security Act can be models for Health Care Reform, then we are surely on the right track. True, the health care bill that President Obama will soon sign has problems, and in some ways falls short of our ideal plans. But there is no denying that it will be the most progressive reform to our country in at least 75 years. It will permanently change our country from one where affordable health care is a privilege to one where it is a right. And over time, it will be improved, like the great reforms of history.

Monroe’s column will be back in February—Editor
