



Voter

www.lwvpalosverdes.org

(310) 784-7787

May/June 2016

Calendar 2016

Wednesday	May 11	Board Meeting	Noon	Nell Mirels' House
Wednesday	May 11	Supervisor's Forum Torrance Civic Center 3330 Civic Center Torrance, CA 90503	6:30-9:00 PM	Nakano Theater
Sunday	May 15	Candidates Forum 66 th Assembly; 55 th State Senate; 44 th Congressional District	1:00-5:00 PM	Toyota Meeting Hall Torrance Civic Center 3330 Civic Center Torrance, CA 90503
Monday	May 23	LWVLA County Board Retreat	9:30-2:00 PM	Mary and Joseph Retreat 5300 Crest Road RPV, CA 90275
Wednesday	June 11	LWV PVP Convention	9:30-2:00 PM	Ports of Call Restaurant
Thurs- Sun.	June 16-19	LWVUS Convention		Washington DC

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This Month's Co-Presidents' Message

We are now in the midst of arranging for our Call to Convention. Our fiscal year ends in June and we hope to see you all at our local Convention in San Pedro Ports of Call. Besides an interesting speaker we have some important business to conduct. The most important is that we need to raise our dues. For several years now we have tried to hold back on changing our dues. We know most of our members are retired and on budgets. However, State and National dues have been raising the amount of our "per member fees" each year. Because the per-member dues we send to National, State and County take most of our dues' money--we have recently only been able to keep about \$5 from each member locally. This amounted to less than \$100 total from all of our local membership. So we are now forced to increase our dues. Our new dues will be \$80 a year for a single membership and \$120 for a family membership. In addition we will pro-rate our dues for new members as they join for their first year depending on the month when they join us. Since our new year starts in July—your dues should be sent to Cindy now.

You have already received a "Save the Date" for a coming membership drive event. Plans to make this a memorable afternoon for you as members and for any people you invite are underway. Hopefully many of you we have missed seeing recently will be able to attend. We will be sending out invitations a little later.

Voter Service has become increasingly important to all of us this election year and Nancy can use your help. Please feel free to email her at nlmahr@verizon.net or call her at 310-377-0735. There are some forums already planned—check our calendar. Later we will need speakers for propositions. This is a service we provide that is much appreciated by various groups in our community.

We continue to have a few new members. Please welcome them to the League when you meet them.

Katy Watkins (310-408-6211) and *Vi Jungerich* (310-541-5092)
Co-Presidents

Welcome to our newest members!

Sandra (Sondi) M. Culler
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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PALOS VERDES PENINSULA

CALL TO CONVENTION



ANNUAL CONVENTION 2016

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2016

PORTS O'CALL RESTAURANT

Captain's Quarters

1200 Nagoya Way

San Pedro, CA

9:30 AM -- 2:00 PM

SPEAKER from Harbor Interfaith Shelter

SUBJECT – Homelessness in San Pedro

REGISTRATION & LUNCH \$30

Make check out to LWVPVP and mail to:

Cindy Kondon

29910 Avenida Anillo, RPV, 90275

NAME: _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ for _____ person(s)

Please submit reservations and **menu choice** by **June 1, 2016**

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE MENU CHOICE

Chicken Chardonnay

Vegetarian Pasta

Pat Rome Update



Pat Rome has been having serious heart issues for the past year but now -- really good news.

She is doing very well according to her cardiac surgeon and her primary doctor. You may not know that a few days following her surgery she went into cardiac arrest and flat-lined. Luckily it happened in the hospital and they brought her back. She now has a pacemaker and has been at home at her son's house in Van Nuys for about a week. This has probably been coming on since her car accident nearly two years ago.

If you wish give her a call at **818-994-4334**.

Educational Update

Here is the link to a very interesting article about how college pays off.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2011/collegepayoff.pdf>

Voter Service - by Nancy Mahr

The primary election is on June 7. We will be voting on candidates for US President, US Senate, State Assembly District 66 (David Hadley incumbent), County Central Committee (party office), County Supervisor 4th District (Supervisor Knabe is termed out), County District Attorney, and multiple judges. There are 174 judicial offices up, but several will not be on the ballot as they will not be contested. There will also be one state ballot measure – put on the ballot by the Legislature.

The County League is partnering with the LA City League to publish an Election Guide for County offices and judges and the ballot measure pros and cons. This will be available in early May. LWVCA makes available the Easy Voter Guide, which includes the federal and state offices. We will have copies of this publication as well.

LWV PVP is joining Beach Cities and Torrance Area leagues in conducting a candidate forum for the State Assembly seat and for County Supervisor. This will be in April or May – details have not been finalized. Watch for information on this forum.

Be sure you are registered to vote. You can register online at the website of the County Registrar Recorder/County Clerk, www.lavote.net. If you want to change your address or party affiliation, you will need to re-register. Final day for registration is May 23.

Don't forget to keep track of the candidates' views on VOTER'S EDGE - the new site that combines LWV's Smart Voter and Maplight, a site that gives information on campaign money. You can now access both at www.votersedge.org.

Most important – VOTE.

Agricultural Article

GMOs (GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS): GLOBAL SOLUTION OR GLOBAL RISK?

By
Pat Colby

League members **Janet MacLeod** and **Pat Colby** attended this GMO Oppenheimer lecture series at UCLA's Anderson School of Management on April 19, 2016. The presenters' positions are outlined below.

Professor Pamela Ronald, a well-known UC Davis scientist (plant pathologist & geneticist), is a public defender of genetically engineered crops—a position she has promoted in articles in the *Boston Globe*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist* and on NPR.

Her lab at UC Davis isolated genes from rice that can resist disease and tolerate floods. When those genes are inserted into existing rice plants, they help farmers grow high-yield harvests in places where the crop is a vulnerable staple. Ronald also praised the genetically modified eggplant, a nutrient-rich staple in the diets of populations in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Prior to the introduction of the modified Bt eggplant, farmers in these countries sprayed chemical insecticides on their eggplant crops, daily and sometimes twice a day. Yet, eggplant farmers suffered significant yield losses, 50-70% annually due to the Eggplant Fruit and Shoot Borer (FSB) larvae that feed on leaf tissues and tunnel inside shoots and fruits. Bt stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a common soil bacterium that contains a gene which produces a protein harmful to FSB. Scientists have incorporated this gene to eggplant to create insect resistance. Other Bt crops such as Bt corn and Bt cotton have shown improved pest management and reduced insecticide use.

As Ronald sees it, humans have been tampering with plants for 10,000 years. Nearly everything cultivated has been modified at some point, in some way to taste better, look better, grow better. She looks at generic engineering as an extension of plant breeding: manipulating genes in a lab is analogous to a positive mutation that could occur in nature.

Professor Timothy A. Wise, Director of Research & Policy Program at Global Development & Environmental Institute, Tufts University, states that science research is not settled on GMO safety. Yet corporations are pushing proprietary technology on people before it's tested. He worries that genetic engineering mostly helps monocropping and more herbicide use. Monsanto's Roundup Ready crops account for the vast majority of corn, cotton and soybean grown in the US today. But because these plants are bred to resist herbicides such as glyphosate, farmers have to use more and more powerful sprays.

He is concerned about small farmers. Biotechnology has made seeds too expensive. They are patented and produced by giant multinational corporations like Monsanto. In turn, they price out poor farmers. He estimates there are at least 570 million small farms world-wide, of which 500 million can be considered family farms with 475 million farms being less than two hectares in size.

Wise is additionally concerned about crop diversity. In Mexico, maize (corn) is the basic staple food for human consumption. Five thousand years of maize domestication has generated more than 40 races of maize specialized for direct human consumption (one study found that on average about 59% of human energy intake and 39% of protein intake was provided by maize grain in the form of the tortilla.)

By contrast, in the last 100 years, the industrialized countries have specialized in developing maize for animal consumption and industrial use. Mexico is the ancestral home of maize, and possesses a unique and irreplaceable genetic diversity of varieties (landraces). Most of the country's corn production comes from traditional landraces cultivated by peasant farmers from seeds they preserve from their own crops and from the exchange of seeds with neighbors in their communities. Wise argues that this arrangement

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conserves maize genetic resources and is essential to the long-term security of this important food crop. He further notes that the changes since the adoption of NAFTA have resulted in an increase in corn exports to Mexico from the US. These sales to Mexico assume a greater importance because Mexico has remained open to GM grains while other markets (Europe and parts of Asia) have rejected them. What effect will this have on the biodiversity of Mexican maize? What unintended consequences might occur?

Wise says US agriculture in general, and corn production in particular, rely on intensive application of fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides. These chemicals contribute to agricultural productivity, but they also create problems of water pollution, with risks to human health and natural ecosystems—runoff of excess nitrogen and phosphate fertilizer contaminates surface and groundwater supplies, promoting algae growth which reduces oxygen in water making it difficult for fish or other wildlife to survive. The debate on the safety and environmental impacts of biotechnology is still heated and unresolved.

Peter Kareiva, Director of Institute of Environment & Stability, UCLA, believes in a holistic approach to addressing major environmental challenges. “We need environmentalism that attacks problems with engineering, technology, economics, politics, history, psychology and the humanities and the arts.” Kareiva’s approach dovetails with the Sustainable L.A. Grand Challenge, a UCLA-wide research initiative to develop solutions to help the Los Angeles region transition to 100% renewable energy, 100% local water and enhanced ecosystem health by 2050.

Kareiva says now that more world-wide attention is being paid to agriculture, it is time to ask if GMOs have a place in advancing conservation

and sustainability. He quotes the National Academy of Sciences—which recently examined the risks and benefits of GMOs in agriculture—and concluded that GMOs often are more sustainable than conventional crops and reasserted its longstanding position that their environmental risks be determined on a trait-by-trait basis. Agriculture takes up more land and consumes more water than any other activity on earth and agriculture is bound to eat up even more land and water as the human population soon moves past 7 billion on its way to 9 billion by 2050.

At the same time, using technology to increase agricultural yields (meaning increases in the calories and nutritional value generated per acre of land) and increase efficiencies in agriculture’s water use would mean sparing land and water for nature. GMOs could play a crucial role in this equation. For example, recent studies reveal that genetically engineered cassava can store four times the amount of protein compared to regular cassava. Plants engineered for enhanced yields or improved nutritional value could be a boon to humanity and the planet.

Kareiva maintains that serious, thorough risk assessment of GMOs is essential. He has argued elsewhere that the risk assessments performed to date have been inadequate in terms of rigor. But once a crop has undergone thorough risk assessment and its risks are judged as minimal, it is time to move past ideology and embrace the potential benefits that crop offers. Transgenic cassava is but one of many GMO possibilities that could be beneficial for both people and the environment. Nature needs us to maximize the efficiency of food production so we can minimize the footprint of agriculture on the planet.

Legislative Interview with Assemblymember David Hadley

On Friday, January 22, 2016, Assemblymember David Hadley met with five League of Women Voters members as part of the League annual Legislative Interview program. Mr. Hadley, a self-described moderate, answered three key questions and participated in a wide-ranging discussion of current legislative priorities.

Los Angeles County League of Women Voters President Nancy Mahr and League of Women Voters Torrance Area President Athena Cormier conducted the interviews. The questions and Mr. Hadley's responses follow:

1. **Voting and Elections – What legislative proposals would you support to improve the number of California citizens who register and turn out to vote? Are there other steps that government should take to engage more California residents in elections?**

- A. Mr. Hadley recognized that we have a crisis in voter participation. He noted that the South Bay voting numbers are at the low end of voter turnout in the state but at the high end of Los Angeles County voter turnout by a huge margin. He pointed out that although there are more people in Southern California than in Northern California, our governing representation is mostly from Northern California and the Bay Area has far better voter turnout. "We are underrepresented in decision making," he commented. He expressed the wish that this problem were easier to fix. "It is not that hard to vote," he said. But we have an old-style voting system. Nowadays, everything is done on line from shopping to bill paying and other financial transactions. Expecting young people to use paper ballots doesn't encourage voting. We need to be more aggressive with technology. For example, our ATMs and our
- financial systems move trillions of dollars around securely so the voting system could be electronic and secure. Move money around and we manage to make things easy and secure. We need to do more to support online registration – not everyone knows this is available.
- B. He pointed to California Secretary of State Alex Padilla's web site (sos.ca.gov) that enables people to dedicate their vote to veterans as an example of a way to remind people of the importance of their vote. He said that he would love it if the League of Women Voters would market that portion of the Secretary's program. He stated that he was open to weekend elections in order to encourage more people to vote because "election day is not the event that it used to be." He noted that currently 60% of the voting in California is done by absentee ballot. Mr. Hadley added that Senator Ben Allen, Chair of the Elections Commission in the California Senate, is working on creating voting centers rather than precincts. This would make voting more convenient. He feels that precincts are somewhat obsolete in this digital world.
- C. He expressed his opinion that the main issue in California is that we are a one-party state. His view is that people think their vote does not matter because we are "written off" in elections and it is tough to get people fired up. "One of my jobs is to make the state more competitive."
- D. Mr. Hadley pointed to the large number of elected positions in California – judges, water boards, library districts, insurance commissions and others.

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There are so many that it is often overwhelming for people to vote. "And that is before you talk about ballot measures!" It is much more complex to vote locally than to vote in federal elections that are less frequent and less complex. He asked if perhaps we should we hold the governor responsible for some areas of state policy instead of having voters elect so many statewide officers. "Some of our elected offices perhaps might be appointed." The vast majority of voters have no idea who the people running are for many offices.

- E. He summarized the discussion by saying that we can make voting easier and more convenient and that we can have online voting that is secure. He noted that Dean C. Logan, Los Angeles County Registrar/Recorder, is right in not rushing to implement a technology-based solution but that voting accessibility does need to be the goal. "We need to broaden the use of the franchise whenever we can," he concluded.

2. **Housing – What will you do to ensure that your constituents are not displaced from their homes, and what steps would you take to increase the supply of housing – especially housing that is affordable to people of modest means? Do you agree this would require a stable and dedicated source of funding?**

- A. Mr. Hadley pointed out that this is a very complicated topic. He agreed that we need to make sure that people are not displaced from their homes. "I am a strong protector of Proposition 13. I know this is not popular with everyone but it passed in the '70s and is still popular because of rising housing costs."

- B. Mr. Hadley described the situation in the South Bay where we have very high housing prices because of the desirability of living here. He feels that the single biggest thing we can do to improve the situation is to improve the LA Unified School District. People pay a huge price to be in the South Bay because of our schools. He pointed out that we are blessed to have five locally managed school districts here that do a great job: Palos Verdes, Torrance and the three Beach Cities (Redondo, Hermosa, Manhattan). He noted that AB803, which he introduced, gives cities and communities a path to form locally controlled school districts. "We have a huge premium in the South Bay because of our schools and we need to give parents who can't afford the local housing costs a way to improve their children's education." He also mentioned that we have one of the highest tax burdens in the nation but one of the lowest school rankings. He mentioned that he thinks that parents should have the choice on which school to send their children to. That underprivileged or children from lower income families should not be forced to accept a lesser education.

- C. He also talked about housing supply, which he says is key to the situation. It is so hard to build housing here that the supply is down. He pointed to a 2015 study on housing produced by a San Francisco law firm, *In the Name of the Environment: Litigation Abuse Under CEQA*. This Holland & Knight report is the first comprehensive study of lawsuits filed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Analyzing all CEQA lawsuits filed in California over a three-year period, 2010-2012, the report systematically documents widespread abuse of CEQA litigation

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that undermines the state's environmental, social equity and economic priorities. Hadley feels that these lawsuits undermine our ability to create new housing and proposes a base-line reform in CEQA that will allow us to know who is filing the lawsuits, knowledge which is not accessible now.

- D. Mr. Hadley noted that we will always have many people wanting to live here and that there is real resistance against increased traffic, population density and other problems brought on by increased population. He added that we can't accommodate everyone here and we will never make housing cheap. There is a funding issue but it won't solve the main problem: it is hard to build here and everyone wants to live here. We can help the truly poor and veterans, for example, but we cannot fix the problem overall except by increasing supply and by improving the non South Bay school districts where people can afford to live.
- E. He noted with pride that his AB306 now enables children of active-duty military service families to attend schools outside their district of residence. He gave the history of the problem that relates to the Los Angeles Air Force Base, housing for which is in San Pedro (LA Unified Schools). He gave the example of the base commander from VA whose husband and children stayed in VA until they could get a waiver from LAUSD to go to the school of their choice. They waited 1 year for this to happen before moving out here. The children of military families move a lot and therefore this is a real burden

that we put on the possible short stay here and on a family who is already sacrificing for our country. He talked about the prior reluctance of LA Unified to give waivers so that children could attend other schools. He talked about the Palos Verdes Schools that have gone to Ft. MacArthur to market their school district to military families! "I am a one-step at a time person," he said. But this step begs the question of why all children can't have the same privilege to select a school district.

3. **Climate Change – What are your priorities for state legislation and policies on climate change? Are there other related issues that you feel need to be addressed?**

- A. Mr. Hadley said that he was "trying to participate in the conversation" and pointed to the fact that he was one of two Republicans who voted for SB350. (*Note – Catherine Baker, District 16, was the other). He noted that there is a lot we don't understand about the climate but the earth is getting warmer. There is a coherent theory about why that is happening and "prudence requires we act even if there are questions about the science." He emphasized the difficulty of really doing anything significant since even if we "returned our economy to the Stone Age, it would not move the needle," because rising emissions in China and India, for example, would present serious challenges. He also pointed out that there are California political leaders such as Governor Brown and Senate Pro Tem de Leon who have taken on the cause and that he is not proposing a specific plan given his freshman status.

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B. Environmental issues present serious challenges. Mr. Hadley pointed to two different economies in our state – a very technologically sophisticated, affluent and educated technology sector that doesn't consume a whole lot of carbon and "everyone else," that is, people responsible for manufacturing and agriculture. In California, it is hard to make a good living outside the technology economy. "If you think the solution to our environmental problem is to bankrupt whole regions, communities and industries in the state economy, that is not good." California, Hadley pointed out, has the highest "energy poverty" index in the United States. That is an index that looks at people who spend a high percentage of their income on energy.

C. He pointed to three factors:

1. "I am a Republican who takes this issue seriously and is proud to engage."
2. The need to create broadly shared prosperity through our environmental policy.
3. The National Security issue - Energy independence has a real value – "people in the world who wish us harm are petroleum powers. "I worry about the most aggressive environmentalists who want to make oil someone else's problem and increase U.S. dependence on foreign energy," he concluded.

The last question was one of particular local concern – Education. Mr. Hadley noted that he is a "Public School Dad." He believes in local control and fought to overturn the cap on local school reserves to give schools more flexibility. He is working to see how to advance local control and to give communities the ability to create their own school districts. He said that

he will continue to be very focused on this issue. He believes in the Local Control Funding Formula but he feels the math was too punitive to the South Bay and that it needs to be changed – not the principle of local control but the math. He also worries about the State Education Code, now 2000 pages long and far too complex.

He commented that he is a "legislative public policy geek" and worries that we have two parties – a majority and a minority – that are mirror images of one another. He stressed that we need to change the Legislature and make the minority party more engaged and more competitive. He laughingly related that at different points in his life he had been a registered Democrat, Libertarian and Republican and he told us he considers himself a common sense moderate.

In his final statement he said a particular peeve of his is the money we are wasting on the high-speed train. "We should kill the bullet train and spend the money on local transportation." He feels that the money would be better spent helping people get places locally and made quite a plea for improved local transportation.

We thanked Assemblymember David Hadley for his open, engaging responses that drew on personal experiences. We all felt that the time was well spent and that we had a good chance to get to know our representative.

Attendees: League of Women Voters Members:

Nancy Mahr, LWV Los Angeles County President, Palos Verdes Peninsula,

Athena Cormier, LWV Torrance Area President, Joan Arias, LWV Beach Cities Secretary

Briana Krank, LWV Torrance Area Secretary, Emma Simmons, LWV Torrance Area Communications Chair

Mr. David Hadley, Assemblymember 66th district

Staff - Sarah Wiltfong, District Director, Dylan Gray, Communications Director



Join The League!

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to all men and women who are registered voters.

Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Just fill out the membership form below and mail it to:

LWV PVP, PO Box 2933, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274.

Please make checks payable to *LWV PVP*

Membership Form

Name _____

Name(s) of additional member(s) in household _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (home) _____ Phone (work/day/cell) _____

Email address _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

\$65.00 one member

\$32.50 additional member in the same household.

Dues are tax deductible. LWV PVP is a 501(c)(3) organization.

LWV PVP Officers and Board Member Contact Information:

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