

Conservation Voter

March 2004

Celebrating the Environment DOS DE MAYO

Los Angeles County residents who care about the environment have a lot to celebrate this year - and they'll be celebrating together at the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters (LALCV) annual awards event on May 2.

"Dos de Mayo" is the theme for this year's annual Smith-Weiss Environmental Champion Awards, which will recognize local leadership in addressing environmental issues ranging from the gravel pits of Irwindale to the Port of Los Angeles, as well as the rebirth of the Los Angeles River and efforts to find regional solutions to the area's transportation challenges.



LA City Councilmember, Jack Weiss (right) with Steve Fleischli, former head of Santa Monica BayKeeper and Andi Liebenbaum, president of LALCV

The awards ceremony will once again take place at the Hancock Park home of Mary Nichols, director of UCLA's Institute of the Environment and former California Secretary of Resources. The event begins at 3 p.m. LALCV 2003 honoree, Los Angeles City Councilmember Jack Weiss will serve

as master of ceremonies.

Being honored for public service will be U.S. Representative Hilda Solis, who has waged a battle at the state and national levels to defend communities that often suffer disproportionately from pollution. Los Angeles City Councilmember Ed Reyes also is being recognized for public service as a result of his efforts to revitalize the Los Angeles River, and El Segundo Mayor Mike Gordon will be saluted for his long-fought efforts to find a fair solution to overcrowding at LAX. LALCV will honor the Wilmington Coalition for a Safe Environment for the group's crucial role in forcing the Port of Los Angeles to address community concerns related to a major port expansion project. Find out more about this year's exceptional honorees inside this edition of The Conservation Voter.

LALCV's annual awards event has become a "can't miss it" event for the region's environmental public servants, consistently drawing dozens of local and state elected officials. Sponsorships and individual tickets are still available. For more information, log on to www.lalcv.org or call Moe Stavnezer at (626) 287-6485.

April Endorsements

CULVER CITY PRESENTS OPPORTUNITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MAJORITY

There may not be a beach in Culver City, but the tide is definitely changing. Two years ago, the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters (LALCV) helped infuse environmentalism into the Culver City City Council by endorsing Gary Silbiger. Silbiger's election changed the dynamic on the Council from a 5-0 (no pro-environment votes) to 4 to 1, with Silbiger representing one solid pro-environment vote.

In the April city council election in Culver City, LALCV is seizing the opportunity to improve the pro-environment representation yet again, to a 3 to 2 pro-environment

majority. How? With the endorsement and (we hope) election of two more strong environmental candidates - Tom Camarella and Maryanne Green.

Camarella has a long history of labor, social justice and environmental activism. Tom is the former president of the Southern California Citizens for Global Solutions, as well as a long time labor union representative. He is a current board member of the progressive public radio station KPFK, and he would bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and environmental understanding to Culver City's City Council.

Maryanne Greene has spent much of her life both advocating for the environment and community. Professionally, Greene's career has been dedicated to law

Smith-Weiss Honorees for 2004

Mayor Mike Gordon Gets it Right in El Segundo

First elected to the El Segundo City Council in 1998 and elected Mayor by the council that same year, Mike Gordon has built a record of achievement protecting and improving the quality of life for his constituents and improving economic development in the city at the same time.

When dozens of cities in Los Angeles County were hiring lawyers or filing lawsuits to avoid compliance with the Clean Water Act, Gordon chose a different path. He led the city to create a pilot project to reach compliance with local rules that will eventually eliminate the urban runoff that pollutes our beaches after every rainfall.

Along with Ruth Galanter from Los Angeles and others, Gordon led the fight to limit the unwarranted expansion of LAX and pursue a regional solution to expanding airport capacity. These are the big fights that illustrate Gordon's commitment to the environment. There are also the everyday accomplishments of improved transportation, expanded park areas, and preserved open spaces.

Reyes Pulls Together Forces to Revitalize LA River

Making the Los Angeles River a centerpiece of a new community spirit in LA is a passion for LA City Councilmember Ed Reyes. Reyes initiated and chairs the Council's Ad Hoc Committee on the LA River, focusing staff and energy on identifying and unifying existing river improvement efforts, and pulling together a comprehensive river revitalization plan.

Closely linked to river efforts, but significant in its own right, is the successful creation of a new state park at Taylor Yard, where Reyes facilitated an historic cooperative agreement between City and State Parks Departments to create a 40-acre regional park that will include recreational facilities as well as passive green space to serve the community needs.

Reyes has also been a champion of clean, affordable transportation options for Los Angeles, chairing the Los Angeles-to-Pasadena Gold Line Authority and fostering transportation-oriented development as well as projects to improve and expand bike paths and pedestrian-friendly corridors in Northeast Los Angeles.

Solis' Efforts Link Health and Environment

During her tenure as a member of the California State Assembly, State Senate and in more than two terms in Congress, Hilda Solis has been a powerful advocate and leader for the rights of the people of Southern California to have clean air, clean water, and access to nature.

Solis has repeatedly demonstrated her commitment to the health of her constituents and their environment. Concerned about potentially hazardous levels of pollution in the air for the residents of the north-central communities of the San Gabriel Valley that border gravel mining operations, Solis has been leading the charge to have the South Coast Air Quality Management District monitor particulate matter levels. With U.S. Rep. Mark Udall, she has challenged the federal government to follow California's lead by introducing the Environmental Justice Act of 2003. Solis' bill to study the feasibility of the San Gabriel River joining the National Parks System was signed into law in 2003. She is the sponsor of the Southern California Wild Heritage Wilderness Bill, which Barbara Boxer sponsored in the U.S. Senate, to protect and preserve Southern California's wild lands.

Wilmington Coalition for a Safe Environment - The Name Says it All

The Wilmington Coalition for a Safe Environment, chaired by Jesse Marquez, leads the fight on Port of LA and oil refinery air emissions and public safety issues in the San Pedro-Wilmington communities of Los Angeles. The Coalition was formed as a response to the explosions and fires at the old Arco Golden Eagle facility, and has grown to become an invaluable community-organizing tool that engages in activism and litigation.

The refineries and the Port are not the Coalition's only targets, however. The Coalition also promotes safe residential neighborhoods by championing parks and open space, and even applying for a grant to reestablish a tidal wetland in the community where the former 3,800-acre Wilmington estuary was once the largest and most productive in Southern California. The Wilmington Coalition for a Safe Environment also advocates for greater public access to the waterfront and area beaches, particularly those north of San Pedro along the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

LALCV at Work in Your Communities

(April Endorsements continued from page 1)

enforcement and corrections, and her volunteer activities, both as president of the Blair Hills Neighborhood Association and chairperson of the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, have resulted in world-class urban parks in place of mass development in many of the Baldwin Hills neighborhoods. In addition to her environmental leadership, Greene belongs to many of the region's key environmental education and advocacy organizations.

We are proud to announce our endorsement of Maryanne Greene and Tom Camarella for election to the Culver City City Council. Our contributions to their campaigns are possible thanks to the generosity of donors like you. Please consider another contribution today, so that other outstanding candidates can count on our support.

EL SEGUNDO ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP TO CHANGE HANDS

With longtime El Segundo Mayor and City Councilmember Mike Gordon likely heading to Sacramento to replace retiring Assemblymember George Nakano, the city will be losing a real environmental leader (see article in this issue on Gordon being honored this year by LALCV).

LALCV has identified two possible successors to help continue El Segundo's progressive environmental agenda. The League has endorsed Eric Busch and Jim Boulgarides for the El Segundo City Council. Three seats are up for grabs in the April 6 election.

Busch, an 11-year resident of El Segundo, would bring environmental experience to the Council, having served as corporate and environmental safety officer for Sony Pictures. Busch says he will promote environmental stewardship by the business community, encourage carpooling and increased use of mass transit, and work to ensure compliance with clean water and clean air goals. Mike Gordon is among those local officials endorsing Eric's bid for a council seat.

Jim Boulgarides was raised on public service, with his father having served on Culver City's City Council for 16 years and his mother a veteran of the school board. He's been a firefighter and a lifeguard, and served as the public information officer for LA County Lifeguards. Jim worked

successfully to secure a \$40,000 grant from the Santa Monica Bay Restoration project to undertake a public information outreach effort that began a grassroots movement reaching some 10,000 middle and high school students. Jim is passionate about the environment and his city, and would make a difference on the El Segundo City Council.

TWO LONG BEACH CANDIDATES GET LALCV SUPPORT

The Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters proudly announces its endorsement of two candidates for Long Beach City Council, incumbent Council Member Laura Richardson, who is running to keep her Sixth District seat, and political newcomer and middle school social studies teacher, Patrick O'Donnell, who is running in the Fourth District.

Laura Richardson successfully ran for the Sixth District seat four years ago and has used her position to reduce trash, create meaningful park space, and fight for and protect the limit on flights into and out of Long Beach airport.

Priorities for a second term include increasing green space, improving river links throughout the City as well as improving the quality of the Los Angeles River, reducing truck traffic on the 710 Freeway and promoting greater utilization of the Alameda Corridor, and examining the air quality impacts of the Long Beach Airport, the Port of Long Beach and the freeway system.

Long Beach City Council candidate for the Fourth District, Patrick O'Donnell, plans to address several serious environmental issues facing Long Beach if he is elected, with particular interest in dealing with air quality, noise and congestion matters that result from airport traffic. O'Donnell said he would push for a comprehensive health assessment for the City as well as a full EIR on the impacts of plans to expand the Long Beach Airport.

O'Donnell also expresses his interest in restoring and protecting the Los Cerritos Wetlands in Long Beach as well as creating additional parkland. As a native of Long Beach and as a middle school teacher who cares about young people, he has been instrumental in promoting a healthy environment for his students. He hopes to bring that interest to City affairs.

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The Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters owes you a big "thank you." As a result of your concerns about air quality, storm water runoff, traffic and road congestion, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, parks and recreation, garbage, graffiti, open space, the LA and San Gabriel Rivers and the many other issues that impact our health, quality of life and the environment, candidates for office are starting to get the message. And when they begin to understand that you care about these issues, they start to think about how to make them part of their campaigns and their efforts as elected officials. In other words, more candidates than ever are seeking an endorsement from the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters because they know that you are paying attention. THANK YOU!

With more candidates than ever seeking information about environmental concerns and hoping for our endorsement, we need to increase our spending so we can endorse more candidates and run independent campaigns as often as possible. We can't do all that without your support. In 2003, we endorsed more candidates than in any previous year (15, as well as three ballot measures), and ran or participated in five independent expenditure campaigns. To do all this, we spent over \$20,000. Our goal for 2004 is to endorse more candidates and spend more money helping to get them elected - at least \$30,000! To accomplish this, we need your help yet again. While your interest in our issues makes our endorsement one of the most sought-after in the County, it's your financial contributions that will enable us to interview more candidates, endorse more candidates, and help get the best candidates elected.

The remittance envelope included with this newsletter should not be recycled. It should be used by you to make a contribution to the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters today! Any amount helps. To find out more about our recent endorsements, our efforts in many cities throughout the County, and how to get an invitation to our party on May 2, please enjoy this newsletter and visit our website at www.lalcv.org. We couldn't do this without you. THANK YOU!

Andi Liebenbaum

Andi Liebenbaum, President



Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters
PO Box 6218
Altadena, CA 91003

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