

## Paul Koretz Secures LALCV Endorsement for L.A. City Council 5<sup>th</sup> District

LALCV has endorsed Paul Koretz, who is in a run-off election with David Vahedi for the City's 5th Council District. The election will take place on May 19th.

Koretz has a 25-year record of activism on the environment, including serving as the Southern California Director of the California League of Conservation Voters and as a member of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. He grew up in the 5th Council District, which was part of his district when he served in the California State Assembly from 2000-2006, representing the 42nd District. Koretz's public-service record also includes 12 years on the West Hollywood City Council.

Council District 5 is currently represented by Jack Weiss and includes Encino, Sherman Oaks, Valley Village, and Palms, Westwood, Century City, Beverlywood, the Fairfax District, Cheviot Hills and Carthay Circle, as well as the hillside communities between the 405 Freeway and Laurel Canyon.

Significant environmental issues in the district include expanded development in recent years that has been criticized for lack of adequate environmental overview. The district also faces traffic and parking issues, a need for more public transportation and affordable housing, and open-space and watershed issues shared with many other Los Angeles council districts.

Koretz is campaigning on the following issues: Illegal Billboards and "billboard blight", expanding the subway to the ocean, full environmental impact reviews on all new development, and tough air quality standards.

LALCV's endorsement was based on Koretz's deep understanding of the environmental issues in the City of Los Angeles, generally, and Council District 5, specifically, as well as his long track record of effective action on these issues.

Please join us in supporting the election of Paul Koretz to the City of Los Angeles' City Council in District 5.

## LALCV Hosts Heated City Attorney Debate in Front of Packed House

The Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters rang in Earth Day by hosting a telecast debate between City Attorney candidates Jack Weiss and Carmen "Nuch" Trutanich. The event, held at The Westside Jewish Community Center, was attended by more than 400 people eager to hear the environmental credentials of both candidates. Instead, the candidates, who were the top two vote getters during the March primary election, chose to duck the questions and concentrate their political venom at each other. The hour-long debate will be broadcast on ABC Channel 7 on May 17<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. - noon.



LALCV wants to thank ABC Channel 7, the Manatt Phelps Phillip law firm and the Ron Burkle Foundation for making the event possible.

Weiss, currently a member of the Los Angeles City Council representing Council District 5, is former chairman of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. He accused his opponent of coddling polluters and representing an oil company whose record of oil spills from its Wilmington refinery is still being adjudicated. Weiss frequently referred to an article in a law journal co-written by his opponent regarding defending environmental crimes.

## Our "Desert" Landscape in Los Angeles

by Jessica Hall

We live in a desert. Or so we are told. This is, in fact, one of the greatest myths about Los Angeles. History shows us that European settlers drained the region's once expansive marshes, dried up springs and streams, and helped to dry up a once delicate Mediterranean ecosystem:

*At the date of the settlement of Los Angeles a large portion of the country from the central part of the pueblo to the tide water of the sea through and over which the Los Angeles River now finds its way to the ocean was largely covered with a forest interspersed with tracts of marsh...Instead of having a river way to the sea, the waters spread over the country filling the depressions in the surface and forming lakes, ponds and marshes. - Col. J.J. Warner, 1914*

*...Compton Creek used to run a good stream the year around and the wells would flow the year around, and he remembers one well that was so strong it would throw water about forty feet high. Water does not flow now only in the winter time or when they stop pumping in the beg(sic) wells... - James P. Reagan, describing an interview with George Haylock of Compton, CA, 1914.*

Changes to the landscape altered runoff, which re-shaped rivers and streams, creating, in some places, deep gullies. Combined with poor groundwater management, this also altered the groundwater table of Los Angeles, causing perennial streams, as well as springs, to run dry.

As with major rivers worldwide, industry located along the banks of our rivers and streams, along with railroads; all took advantage of the relatively flat land along the floodplains. Yet our waterways were still places of pleasure, relaxation, and play.

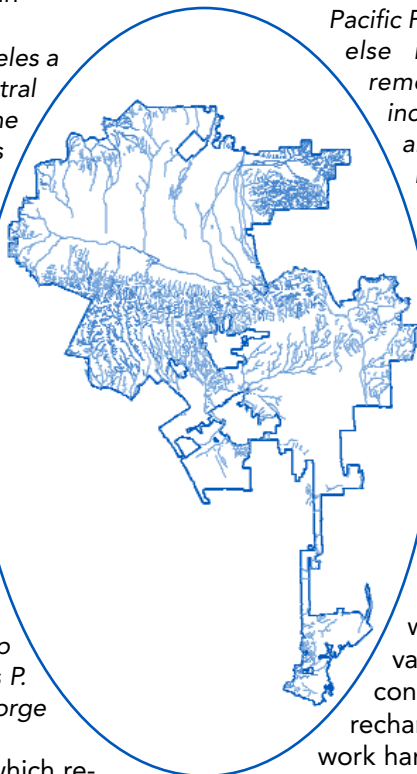
Don Mullaly describes going to the beach at the LA River in the late 1940s, prior to its channelization:

*The beach...was composed of sand and water-rounded chips of shale ...Time was spent swimming, wading around, skipping flat stones, sunbathing, exploring, and looking for small animals... On the beach we found wild native Pacific Pond turtles, Western toads, and not much else in the way of land animals that I remember...Shore birds frightened away included herons, killdeer, sandpipers, egrets, and other species. Small fish were in the river. I should have done some fishing but didn't...Who knows what kinds of fish were lurking in the deep water!*

Unfortunately, Los Angeles faced the dual demons of catastrophic flooding and water shortages that were addressed through channelization and culverting of our local waterways, and new channels importing water from hundreds of miles away.

Rare is the remaining perennial stream in the Los Angeles basin. More common are ephemeral and intermittent (seasonal) streams in our upper canyons, where we haven't developed yet. These valuable streams provide habitat, filter contaminants out of storm water, and help to recharge groundwater and municipalities should work hard to protect them as a public resource.

A different approach would have preserved broad floodplains for the natural functioning of our rivers and streams — and groundwater recharge. This would not have provided the amount of water we use today, but would have given us a different baseline — and measure - of sustainability. We can still work to preserve what's left, and restore the waterways that are degraded within public lands. If for no other reason, to remind ourselves that we don't live in a desert.



(City Attorney debate continued from page 1)

Trutanich, currently in private law practice and formerly an environmental prosecutor in the District Attorney's office, claimed to have put environmental polluters in jail while Weiss put them on his contributor list. Trutanich also cited Weiss' repeated absence at City Council meetings as poor representation of his constituents.

The three panelists, Maria Armoudian, Jessica Hall and Sandra Hamlat, all members of the LALCV Board of Directors, posed insightful questions to elicit the candidates'

views on such issues as environmental justice, upholding the Clean Water Act, sustainable growth, and the enforcement of environmental laws currently on the books. However, rather than give the questioners and the audience their views on what the City Attorney's responsibilities were in these areas, the candidates lit into each other with personal attacks. Unfortunately, given that the debate was not as informative as we hoped it would be, the LALCV Board voted to not endorse.

# LALCV Hosts 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Smith-Weiss Environmental Awards

The Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters will be hosting our seventh annual Smith-Weiss Environmental Champion Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2009 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM at the Hancock Park home of Marjorie and John Nielsen located at 434 South Lorraine Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90020. The theme is **Sun, Wind, and Water: Renewing Our Economy**, hailing the power of renewable energy to create jobs and revitalize our economy.

LALCV will be honoring four outstanding individuals in recognition of their environmental work:

- ❖ **Michael Feuer**, California State Assembly Member
- ❖ **Kevin McKeown**, Santa Monica City Council Member
- ❖ **Cecilia Estolano**, CEO, Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles
- ❖ **Captain Charles Moore**, Founder Algalita Marine Research Foundation

In 2008, LALCV contributed \$54,000 to winning candidates and ballot measures as well as spent \$12,000 to host a debate between candidates for the Los Angeles County Supervisor's Second District seat. LALCV endorsed winning candidates running for Los Angeles County Supervisor, as well as candidates in El Segundo, Culver City, Pomona, Maywood, and Torrance.



**Without your support we cannot do this important work.** The work LALCV does ensures that strong environmental candidates are elected to city and county seats. Please attend this event, and help us to continue the work we do. If you cannot attend this event **please make a contribution online** to support LALCV's mission. The more you give the more we can do, and every donation is greatly appreciated.

- ❖ **\$5,000 Total Renewal** - 10 tickets, name listed on program and banner at event, special recognition plaque, special recognition from the podium, mention in press releases
- ❖ **\$2,500 Solar Stalwart** - 10 tickets, name listed on program and banner at event, special recognition plaque, special recognition from the podium, mention in press releases
- ❖ **\$1,000 Wind Walker** - 5 tickets, name listed on program and banner at event, mention in press releases
- ❖ **\$500 Water Bearer** - 5 tickets, name listed on program and banner at event
- ❖ **\$250 Sun Supporter** - 3 tickets, name listed on program
- ❖ **\$75 Windmill Winder** - individual ticket

**You can contribute online at  
[www.lalcv.org](http://www.lalcv.org)**

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## A Word from LALCV's President



The Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters is the only Political Action Committee in Los Angeles County devoted solely to electing individuals who will do a good job preserving our environment. As a 25 person, all volunteer Board, we constantly struggle to balance our limited resources (both money and Board member time) with the overwhelming need to get involved in as many of the 88 cities that comprise Los Angeles County as possible.

Unlike other environmental organizations we do not get involved on the policy side (though individual members do); we only get involved when there are electoral races, either candidate races or ballot measures.

This year featured many competitive and contentious races in the County, and LALCV was involved with many of them. There are times when we are faced with the choice of the 'lesser of two evils' and there are times when there are many good candidates in a single race. Since we believe it is important for our group to send a message about who we support, we sometimes anger some of our supporters who don't understand why we vote, or do not vote, to endorse various candidates.

At this point let me briefly explain our endorsement process to you, our supporters. First, we decide which races are worthy of consideration. We try to focus on the cities where the most serious environmental needs are and then decide if there are races where our involvement may help. Under the leadership of our endorsement chair, Effie Turnbull Sanders, we select a team of three or four Board members who are neutral in the race. The endorsement team prepares a questionnaire for the candidates to answer. They then meet with the candidates for an in-person, one hour interview. The candidate is alone, no advisors or consultants during the interview. The endorsement team then prepares a report for the entire Board, and at our monthly Board meetings, there is a discussion and a vote is taken whether to endorse a candidate. To receive our endorsement, the candidate must get the support of 2/3 of the Board members present. Occasionally, our Board will vote to 'Not Endorse', which means, roughly, that the Board did not believe that either candidate rose to the level necessary in order to garner our endorsement.

Please know that we strictly adhere to our process, which has worked well for us for more than 30 years. Please also know that the Board is comprised of a very diverse group of folks who give selflessly of their time, for no gain. While we are far from perfect, we strive to do the best we can, with the limited resources at our disposal.

We welcome, and seek, any information on candidates running in Los Angeles County to supplement our process. We strongly encourage you to let us know if someone is deserving, or not deserving, of our support. Let us know. Get involved with our organization. We are the political arm of the environmental community in LA County. Help us do an even better job.

Thank You,  
Mitchell Schwartz