

Valley VOTE Report

April 18, 2006 Meeting

David DeVoss

Newsletter Committee Chair

About 40 people, most of them smiling despite having just dropped their 2005 Income Tax returns in the mail, gathered at Galpin Ford last Monday for Valley VOTE's April meeting. Featured guests for the evening were **Bill Rosendahl**, the councilman from LA's 11th district and **Kit Cole**, chief publicist for Waste Management Corporation [WMC], operator of Sun Valley's Brobdingnagian Bradley Landfill.

An evening devoted to progressive developments in Mar Vista and the prospect of more trash for the Valley was not the most pleasant juxtapositioning. But it does reflect the present reality of life in Los Angeles. But before learning about WMC's hopes to expand Trash Mountain, our committee chairmen gave brief reports.

Valley VOTE's emissary to the Los Angeles World Airports authority, **Denny Schneider**, noted that - in sharp contrast to the imperious behavior of former Mayor James Hahn's political appointees - LAWA's new leaders appear guided by public input and consensus. Ongoing changes in the LAX master and specific plans are being made in cooperation with a Regional Operating Group whose goal is a county-wide solution to Southern California's air transport needs. Those interested in attending public meetings, or simply keeping abreast of the decision making process, should visit <http://www.laxmasterplan.org>.

Public complaints regarding LAX and Van Nuys airports finally have prompted a federal study whose aim is to implement a partial curfew at LAX and adopt tougher noise control measures at Van Nuys. The process is called a Federal Aviation Requirements (FAR) Part 161 Study. Among the ideas to be discussed at public meetings beginning this fall are a "Quiet Departure Program" in Van Nuys that asks jet aircraft pilots to use noise abatement settings when taking off and restricts jets departing to the south from turning until they have reached an altitude of 1,800-ft. Also up for review will be the routes and altitude requirements of Van Nuys-based helicopters and further restrictions on noisy Stage 2 jets. Under the current unacceptable plan Stage 2 jets may continue using Van Nuys until 2011.

Oxymoronic

Valley VOTE treasurer **Vick Viereck**, who chairs our organization's housing committee says affordable housing in LA is an oxymoron. "On March 13, Antonio Villaraigosa announced he had taken \$50.6 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for use as seed money for 14 projects that would total 697 units," Viereck said. "Since each dollar leverages an additional \$3.10 in state and private funds, each unit will cost at least \$301,980.

"This is supposed to be "affordable housing?" Viereck asked.

"Not including the \$50.6 million from the so called trust fund, the remaining \$228,326 per unit

would cost \$1,368.93 a month to finance with a 30-year 6% interest rate loan. That does not include ANY of the operating costs. But the 2005 “high home” maximum allowable rent level issued by the Los Angeles Housing Department is \$936 for a two-bedroom apartment, and \$1,074 for a three-bedroom apartment. I had to use the 2005 maximum because the Housing Department, three and a half months into 2006, has not yet released the 2006 maximum. Private apartment owners, who succumbed to accepting some financing through the Housing Department, are dependent on receiving that information so they know how much to, or not to raise rents on subject units.”

“It’s no wonder that older, more affordable apartments are deteriorating and disappearing while the taxpayers have to pay the price.”

Robin Gilbert , San Fernando Valley coordinator for California Clean Money Campaign, says there will be a North Hollywood panel discussion on clean money reforms on May 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Colfax Elementary School at 11724 Addison Street. City Council members Wendy Gruel, Bill Rosendahl and Eric Garcetti will be joined by Bob Stern of the Center for Governmental Studies and Susan Lerner, executive director if the CA Clean Money Campaign.

What’s going on with the **Rim of the Valley**, the oft proposed but never implemented nature corridor? **Deb Baumann** says the entire system of linked parks is being stymied by lawyers (who would have guessed?) hired by developers and property owners hoping to insure that the Angeles National Forrest remains their private backyard.

“The process is influenced by Malibu’s wealthy who for years have prevented people from crossing their land to get to public beaches,” she says, adding that those interested in more information should visit www.LATrails.com.

The Man from Mar Vista

Everybody knows **Bill Rosendahl** . At least that’s what Bill Rosendahl thought when he jumped into the race for city councilman after producing 3,000 cable TV public affairs programs over a period of 16 years. “Only after becoming a candidate did I learn the truth,” he smiles. “Two-thirds of my district never had seen my show. It was a humbling experience.”

Fortunately, Rosendahl’s ego has fully recovered and today the self-described “citizen-politician,” who once worked as a psychiatric social worker, promotes tenant’s rights, neighborhood councils and mass transit – issues on which we all can agree.

Since assuming office last year the 60-year old Rosendahl has stopped the \$11 billion LAX expansion, an immensely unpopular give away to cronies of James Hahn who financed his campaign against Valley cityhood. In its place Rosendahl proposes a regional transportation solution where “18 million people don’t have to drive more than one hour to an airport.”

Rosendahl’s support of neighborhood councils is well documented. Less publicized are his views

on clean money politics.

“The way government works is that once people elect a good person they abandon him,” Rosendahl sighs. “Contributions dry up and only lobbyists are around to help. They schmooze, they donate. Much of public policy today is determined by the politics of money.” Rosendahl’s solution: raise more money: “I like to get money from people (to offset that from lobbyists),” he says. “Recently, I sent out 1,341 letters to my dearest friends asking if they’d like to help. I’ve raised \$12,000 in just a week and a half.”

To his credit Rosendahl is battling against the current, lobbyist-dominated campaign financing system. “We know that Clean Money legislation works in Arizona and Maine: he says. “We hope to get a Clean Money on the November ballot, but if we don’t make that date it will appear on the spring of 2007.”

Sun Valley – Not Wasting Away

The Bradley Landfill in Sun Valley is approaching it’s permitted height of 1,010 feet. It is scheduled to close in April 2007. But since it has 12 more months of life left, Waste Management Corp, which operates the facility, would like to like to add 43 feet to the mountain of refuse it already has amassed in the 206-acre Sun Valley facility.

WMC receives about \$37 for every ton of trash it stuffs into the landfill, says **Kit Cole** , WM’s Director of External Affairs. But if the people of Sun Valley permit it to exceed the 1,010-ft ceiling, WMC promises to rebate \$2 per ton it takes in over the next 12 months to the community. It also would like to build a recycling center for trash from commercial and multi-unit buildings that would remain in operation once its present contract expires.

Waste Management is a good neighbor, says Cole. It provides 240 union jobs and an annual payroll of \$13 million. It has spent over \$50 million on technical upgrades to the facility it purchased in 1986. It also uses methane gas from the landfill’s decomposing trash to generate enough electricity to power 10,000 homes.

Cole’s presentation drew a terse response from Jerry Piro, vice-president of the East Valley Coalition. “You are the biggest garbage company in the world,” said Piro. “You have perfectly good landfills in Palmdale and Lancaster with no homes around them. You can afford to move. Why keep dumping on Sun Valley?”

Cole says WM is prepared to pay mitigation fees to the local community in return for approval of the recycling center, but several community leaders in attendance said Sun Valley does not need another trash factory.

At the next Valley VOTE meeting on May 15, President of the City Council Eric Garcetti will be the featured speaker.

Valley VOTE Mission Statement

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, is committed to exploring and implementing programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the city of Los Angeles including opportunities to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.

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