

February 2026 Newsletter

Concerned Citizens



Laguna Woods Village

This Month

**Tuesday, February 3
7 PM**

Clubhouse 7

Robert Chang

**“Asian American Legal
History and Its Effect
On Current Issues”**

**Thursday, February 19
2 PM**

Clubhouse 1

Valerie Wilson, Ph.D.

**“What Trump’s Anti-equity
Agenda Means for
Black America”**

On Village TV

*Most speakers are recorded
for later broadcast on Village TV*

**Concerned Citizens Presents
Wednesdays at 1 PM**

**Friday, February 27, 2026
Board of Directors
Zoom Meeting 1 pm**

On this Valentine’s Day, 2026

INVITATION, NOT THREAT

People unlike us are not our enemies,
strangers maybe,
perhaps friends we have not met yet.

The oldest part of the human body is quick to fear,
it labels unfamiliar as danger,
but that reflex is not wisdom,
it is just ancient alarm.

Science tells a quiet truth,
between you and any other human,
the difference is tiny,
about one tenth of one percent, on average,
and we have built so much suspicion
on that thin sliver.

Skin tone, custom, accent, prayer,
these are not proof of separate human species,
they are the beautiful ways one family
adapts to place and history.

Even our primate relatives remind us of closeness,
humans and chimpanzees are remarkably similar
genetically,
and that should not insult us,
it should humble us into responsibility.

And faith, at its best, agrees with the best of science,
the stranger has dignity,
the neighbor is not optional,
love is not soft,
love is strong enough to tell the truth,
and kind enough to keep the door open.

So here is a living, evolving creed,
built for facts, history, biology, and the sacred:

We belong to one human family.

We choose curiosity before judgment.

We revise when we learn more.

We protect the vulnerable as kin.

We practice truth with kindness.

We treat difference as invitation, not threat.

Because the future is not made by vilifying people we
do not know,
it is made by becoming neighbors,
until “us” finally means everyone.

~ Michael Vernon

MISSION STATEMENT CONCERNED CITIZENS OF LAGUNA WOODS VILLAGE

The purposes of the
organization shall be to
promote world peace,
economic and social
justice for all peoples,
good government,
and protection
of the Earth's
precious resources.

Peaceful street protests are
one of the ways to RESIST
and OBJECT in the current
atmosphere that imperils our
democracy.

Joel Goldstein has compiled
a slideshow of signs from
the [Anti-ICE Rally, Laguna
Hills, January 11, 2026](#).



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*Content printed herein as commentary, opinions, and/or letters does not necessarily
represent the views of Concerned Citizens of Laguna Woods Village.*



**Tuesday,
February 3, 2026
Clubhouse 7
7 PM**

**Members Free
Non-members \$5**

**For Laguna Woods Village
residents and their guests**

Website:
bit.ly/concernedseniors

Email:
cclagunawoodsvillage@gmail.com

**What Asian American Legal History Can
Teach Us About Travel Bans, Birthright
Citizenship, the Trans Military Ban, and
Other Contemporary Issues**

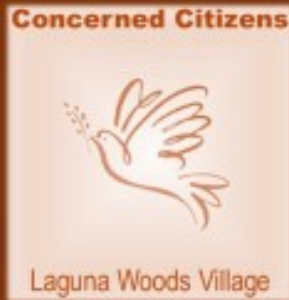
Concerned Citizens Welcomes
Professor Robert S. Chang
UCI School of Law



Based on past cases in which Asian litigants were denied fair and equal treatment, much of what we see in the courts today builds on what might be called immigration exceptionalism and national security exceptionalism.

Q and A will follow the presentation

Professor Robert S. Chang is one of the nation's leading scholars on issues of race and interethnic relations, and one of the most recognized voices on Asian Americans and the law. He is the executive director of the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality at UC Irvine School of Law and is the inaugural chair holder of the Sylvia Mendez Presidential Chair for Civil Rights. Professor Chang received an A.B. from Princeton University and holds M.A. and J.D. degrees from Duke University.



**Thursday,
February 19, 2026
2 PM
Clubhouse 1**

Free To All

**Website:
bit.ly/concernedseniors**

**Email:
cclagunawoodsvillage@gmail.com**

**For Laguna Woods Village residents
and their guests**

Concerned Citizens of Laguna Woods Village
invites you to a live ZOOM presentation by

Valerie Rawlston Wilson, Ph.D.

**What Trump's Anti-equity Agenda
Means for Black America**



The Trump administration made sweeping and harmful changes to decades of established civil and worker's rights laws in the first year of his second presidential term. Dr. Wilson will discuss the current and future impact of that agenda on Black American workers and families.

Q and A will follow the presentation

Valerie Rawlston Wilson, Ph.D., is a labor economist and Director of the Economic Policy Institute's Program on Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy (PREE), a nationally recognized source for expert reports and policy analyses on the economic condition of America's people of color. She has written extensively on various issues impacting racial economic inequality in the United States and is a highly sought-after speaker and consultant. She has also served as Vice President of Research at the National Urban League Washington Bureau, President of the National Economics Association, and is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

Dr. Wilson earned a B.A. in Economics from Hampton University, as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Passing The Treasurer's Torch



Hassan Alief

Hassan Alief “retired” as CCLWV’s faithful treasurer at the end of 2025. Sue Model presented him with a plaque expressing appreciation for his years of service. We hope we’ll continue to see him at our meetings and events!

Now, meet our new treasurer, Robert Cunningham! He and Hassan have been working together on the transition, and as is usually the case when we have a new board member or officer, we ask them to introduce themselves to our members via the newsletter.

Robert writes: “Before moving to Laguna Woods in 2015, I was treasurer of a Whittier homeowner’s association for 20 years.

In 2022, I, along with three other residents, served on the United Mutual Investment Ad Hoc Committee, brought in to curb United’s extensive financial losses due to inappropriate investments in bond funds. As a result of our recommendations, United selected Registered Investment Advisor, Jerry Slusiewicz, to rewrite United’s Investment Policy. Jerry is also the driving force behind LWV’s Financial Forum, where I serve as President.



Robert Cunningham

As a side note, I was treasurer of the LWV Rainbow Club from 2021 to 2023.

I joined Concerned Citizens in 2015. My primary mission as treasurer will be to keep accurate records of all financial transactions and to keep the board up-to-date through timely reports. I thank Hassan for his previous service as treasurer, and Sue Model and Judy Northrop, for their endless help in making this a seamless transition.

In addition to that, I hope to nudge the board to apportion some surplus funds to help out independent journalists in this age of spoon-fed corporate media. For example, Robert Scheer, who has spoken before Concerned Citizens’ audiences multiple times, publishes *ScheerPost*. Both he and his editor-in-chief wife, Narda Zacchino, have waived their salaries in order to pay their staff and their writers. Of course, the board, not me, will make the final decision. I’m off my soapbox now. Thank you for the platform.

Finally, in the last couple of years, I discovered that I am mildly autistic. People on the spectrum are 18 times more likely to have “prosopagnosia” (commonly called “face blindness”) when compared to others not on the spectrum. It’s embarrassing to me whenever I see someone who recognizes me and I don’t recognize them, but now you may know why. I apologize for that.”

ICE Kills, Who's Next?

by Micki Nozaki

Yeah, I'm angry.

1968 angry - when Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. were assassinated.

1970 angry - when the Ohio National Guard fired into a crowd at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine.

And I'm all out, full-on angry in 2026.

Lawless ICE thugs are gunning down American citizens and non-citizens alike. Say their names: Renee Macklin Good and Alex Jeffrey Pretti—American citizens, both killed by ICE gangsters in the streets of Minneapolis.

Countless others dying questionable deaths in federal detention centers.

Unbounded, paramilitary brutes grabbing young children and detaining them in remote centers.

Today, amidst the federal government's reign of guerrilla-style invasions, gut-wrenching anger abounds across the country and throughout the world.

But thankfully, apathy and surrender are nowhere to be seen here in Laguna Woods.

Protesters from our Village and throughout Orange County continue to line the streets of El Toro and Paseo de Valencia, two and three deep, to join with their brothers and sisters in voicing their opposition to ICE killings, Gestapo-like tactics, and anti-immigration sentiments.

Every honking car horn and thumbs up from the commuters signal a compelling sense of solidarity. Drivers demonstrate unity and camaraderie as they hold up their own signs from inside their cars.

Demonstration rallies persist. Amid the backdrop of 1960s protest songs blasting memories from Creedence Clearwater and Buffalo Springfield, loud cries of "This is what democracy looks like" ring through the crowd.

They are peaceful protests organized by Laguna Woods Democratic Club's Activism Chair Janice Burstin, bringing hundreds of men, women, and children to the streets.

And peaceful rallies are good. But we can't rest. There must be more, because no doubt there will be more people dragged from cars, more people pulled out of immigration courts—God help us—more people shot or killed.

We must respond, and we have several ways to stand up to the tyranny.

Peaceful protests. Ongoing events are posted at lagunawoodsdemocrats.org.

Vote in the primary and general elections. Everything you need to know about these critical elections can be found in the LWDC monthly newsletters and on the LWDC website.

Call, email, visit your elected legislators (see page 16). Demand social justice and adherence to our Constitutional rights.

Remember, *Power to the People, Right On* is not merely a song, it's an anthem, it's our battle cry. The time to act is now. Look in the mirror, folks. It's up to us.



Micki Nozaki

Our days begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Out and About With Joel



Joel writes: Want to escape from it all? How about a trip to California's famous and beautiful wine country? Great sights, smells, history, and food—and even a visit to Jack London's home. The pictures really do look better if you click them so they become larger. Click on the collage to view the entire slideshow.

This is 65th in the *Out and About* series. Former albums may be accessed via the newsletter archive section of the Concerned Citizens website.



Joel Goldstein



Housing Insecurity

by Micki Nozaki

How about some good news for a change in the challenging universe of “affordable housing?”

Although federal funding has been substantially reduced, the Neighborhood Congregational Church in Laguna Beach continues to reimagine the affordable housing development at 340 St. Ann’s Drive in Laguna Beach. The newly proposed development, which includes 28 affordable residential units (plus 1 resident manager unit), will benefit the local community. The current design welcomes an eventual rejuvenation of the church’s existing buildings. To learn more about the project, visit nccproject.org.

Collection Drive Underway for OCRRN

During February and March, we can help families who are targeted by immigration raids by supporting the Orange County Rapid Response Network (OCRRN) in donating life necessities to persons and families who are unable to leave their homes.

Concerned Citizens Committee member Leslie El-Sayad, who is leading the collection drive, spoke recently with Felicity Figueroa from OCRRN to discern exactly how our club could support their efforts. She was told that ongoing and pressing needs include diapers (sizes 5 and 6), toilet paper, and cleaning supplies, including dish soap.

Concerned Citizens members can bring donations to our February and March 2026 monthly meetings or drop them off at 68 Calle Aragon, Unit D. Just put them in the beach buggy on the patio.

OCRRN is an interconnected system of non-profit and grassroots organizations, civil rights attorneys, law school clinics, and individuals working together to respond to dehumanizing immigration enforcement activities and policies in Orange County by documenting and disseminating information to the public about immigration raids and immigration enforcement actions; leading communication education events, training for activists & organizers, and outreach to public officials; supporting and enforcing local policies that advance and defend the rights of immigrants; connecting affected people with attorneys that embrace a participatory defense model of deportation defense; and connecting affected people and families with resources.



Micki Nozaki

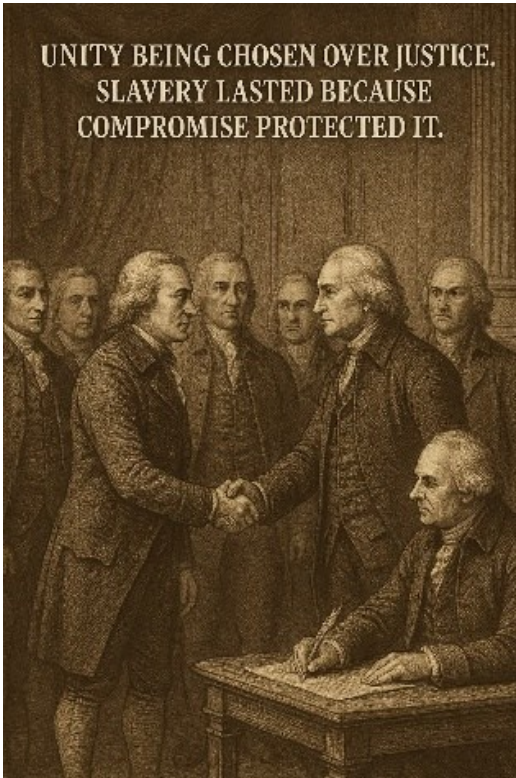
The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices.

~ Jimmy Carter

“Unity Being Chosen Over Justice. Slavery Lasted Because Compromise Protected It.”

This image represents one of the most uncomfortable truths in American history.

When the nation was being formed, the Founders faced a choice: Justice for all or unity at any cost.



They chose unity.

Slavery was debated.

It was questioned.

It was known to be wrong by many of the men in that room.

But instead of ending it, they compromised.

They removed language condemning slavery.

They delayed the issue.

They told themselves, “We’ll deal with it later.”

And that “later” became 89 more years of bondage.

This wasn’t accidental.

Slavery didn’t survive because people didn’t know better.

It survived because powerful men decided that keeping the country together mattered more than Black lives.

Compromise protected slavery.

Politics protected slavery.

Silence protected slavery.

This image isn’t about demonizing history; it’s about telling the truth.

Because when we understand that injustice was preserved by agreement, not ignorance, we better understand why inequality didn’t disappear on its own.

Freedom delayed is freedom denied.

And unity without justice is fragile at best.

History isn’t meant to make us comfortable.

It’s meant to make us honest.

~ Larry D. Roberts

Thankful for Freedom? Whose Freedom? February is Black History Month and a good time to reassess...

“White privilege is the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.”

~ Peggy McIntosh

For help in unpacking your own “invisible knapsack” of white privilege, [click here](#). It is an eye-opening task that’s worth doing every now and then.



Moving from imagining peace to building peace. . .how do we do that?

Peacebuilding is the heart and soul of the United Nations theme for this year: **Act Now for a Peaceful World**. Through their list of **Sustainable Development Goals**, peace is not just a vision. It's a call to action that each of us can answer by promoting respect, understanding, and justice in our daily lives.

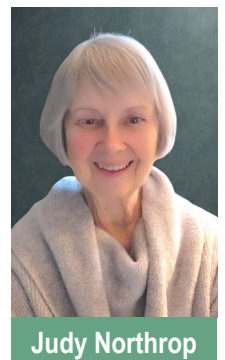
Given the current state of chaos and danger we find now ourselves in as citizens of this country, it seems necessary to focus on the foundation of all that undergirds the UN's work: **The United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.

It took about two years to draft the UDHR, with work beginning in 1946 and culminating in its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1948, following intense negotiations by a diverse drafting committee led by Eleanor Roosevelt.

[The UN website](#) reports that it "is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations

General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. **It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.** The UDHR is widely recognized as having inspired, and paved the way for, the adoption of more than seventy human rights treaties, applied today on a permanent basis at global and regional levels (all containing references to it in their preambles)."

Read it. Save it. Reread it periodically. It's lengthy—30 articles comprise its body. But it is THE reminder of why we resist and protest. We tend to forget these underlying principles that seem so common sense. But if everyone agreed on those, there would not have been such a lengthy drafting process—nor would we find ourselves today protesting and resisting in order to regain and protect those essential tenets of human rights.



We must work for a world where people of all cultures and beliefs live together in mutual respect and full equality. Non-violence does not mean non-action. It takes courage to stand up to those who use violence to enforce their will or beliefs. It requires resolve to face down injustice, discrimination, and brutality.

~ Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Say What?

by Marcia Goldstein

Surely, almost everyone in the country recognizes that the current administration is chronically and compulsively untruthful. What puzzles me is why so much of the country seems to accept that situation. An article by conservative LA Times contributor Veronique de Rugy shows how to shape the perspective of believers. On January 2, she wrote that, “High-income households already shoulder a disproportionate share of the federal income-tax burden. The top 1 % pay roughly 40% of income-tax revenues; the top 10% pay well over two-thirds.” She says that’s not fair. But wait! She is talking about the amount of income tax revenue, not the tax rates those individuals pay.

Of course, federal revenue from the top 10% would come to a lot. They own two-thirds of the wealth of this country! But their individual taxes are nowhere near 67%. High earners benefit from numerous tax write-offs and thus pay notoriously lower income tax, sometimes even zero.

De Rugy also ignores the fact that most people pay 6.2% Social Security tax on their entire incomes. But the payroll tax is capped at incomes over \$176,100. So, if you earn a million dollars, the \$10,912 tax leaves most of your earnings untaxed. If you make a billion dollars, \$999,823,900 of your earnings are not taxed.

Ms. De Rugy was upset by Mitt Romney’s “moral posturing,” i.e., solving fiscal problems by removing the cap on payroll taxes, among other things. She laments that “the call to tax the rich today makes it harder for young people to become rich tomorrow” because “economic mobility depends on the possibility of outsized success.” In case you haven’t already guessed, she sees the real problem as spending on entitlement programs.

Another subtle attitude-shaping move is her statement that people receive more retirement income from Social Security “than they paid in.” Of course we do. What goes unsaid is that our lifetime of contributions is invested in the Social Security Trust Fund and earns interest during our entire working and retirement years. I would challenge Ms. De Rugy to sell holdings in her stock portfolio at the price she paid for them decades ago, receive no dividends, and see no increase in the price of her stocks.

Now my analysis of subtle false reasoning comes to a screeching halt. On January 7, Renee Good was shot and killed by an ICE agent in Minneapolis. Incredible lies poured instantaneously from the mouths of the Trump administration. She “ran over” the agent; she was a professional agitator, a deranged domestic terrorist who was responsible for her own death. Lie piled upon lie—to a nation actually seeing videos of the incident on TV!

So I leave you with just the hope that what I have offered makes you more aware of how easily many still fall for subtle lies. I have no answer for how they fall for blatant, flat-out lies and deliberate manipulation. What is the cause of the absence of shame? The President says his power is limited by “his own morality.” An absent quality cannot limit power or protect anyone.



Marcia Goldstein

The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, true and false, no longer exists.
~ *Hannah Arendt*



The Climate Corner

Mary Sinclair recommends the website, [Elders Climate Action](#) (a SoCal Chapter can be found on Facebook), for seniors interested in ways to help preserve our environment.

She writes that a recent edition was “chock full of new insights and practical tips. . .” One article from [Green America](#) addressed “fast fashion” and how to keep your closet sustainable and find “green gear.” AI-generated information states that “fast fashion” is a business model that rapidly produces trendy, inexpensive clothing, copying runway styles for quick sale, leading to massive overconsumption, immense environmental damage (pollution, water waste, microplastics), and significant ethical concerns like low wages and poor working conditions for garment workers. Key players include Shein, Zara, H&M, Forever 21, Temu.

Check out the links for even more information.



Mary Sinclair

The Most Impactful Things You Can Do for the Climate Aren't What You've Been Told

According to the World Resources Institute, it's not that individual changes don't matter; when someone switches to an electric vehicle (EV) or avoids a flight, they make a real impact. The problem is that without supportive infrastructure, policies or incentives (such as public EV chargers or financial subsidies), these programs struggle to drive the broad-based change the world really needs.

Given that climate change is heavily influenced by government and corporate decisions, our votes and collective consumer power are crucially important.

Voting at both the national and local levels is key, as elections directly determine whether governments enable or hinder pro-climate behaviors. In the U.S., for example, the Trump administration has called to repeal federal tax credits that make sustainable choices, such as EVs and home solar, more financially accessible for Americans.

When national policies shift away from climate action, state and local electoral pressure becomes even more crucial. In California, vehicle emission standards have preserved consumer access to cleaner transportation options amid threats of federal rollbacks.

Likewise, collective consumer pressure can help shift large companies toward more climate- and environmentally friendly practices. This means moving beyond individual purchases toward organizing campaigns that push companies to make sustainable choices the norm. Take Nestlé's Kit Kat: When Greenpeace exposed that the company was using palm oil linked to deforestation—threatening orangutan habitats in Indonesia as well as the climate—[viral campaigns](#) and public outcry forced Nestlé to drop the supplier and commit to sustainable sourcing within five years. [Read more](#)

Don't forget...BYOC! Bring Your Own Cup!

Bring it with you to our CCLWV meetings and fill it at the refreshment bar. Your coffee or tea will taste delicious and there will be no disposable cup to throw away!

Reducing waste is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint. Let's try to go ZERO WASTE!



It's Not a Story

by Judy Northrop

Many are frustrated with today's mainstream media and the growing lack of investigative journalism. Too much critical news goes unreported because of a too-frequent media response that **"it's not a story."** Haunting words for those who wonder why their mainstream TV shows and newspapers seem to have forgotten what investigative journalism is and how vital it is to a functioning democracy.

What social media haters and internet phobics should know is that the news IS being reported—widely—just not where it used to be found. Independent journalists are reporting honestly and forcefully on internet and social media platforms. There is much to be found outside of television news and commentary. Perhaps it's time to give social media and the internet a try!

Michael W. Small's post on Facebook illustrates this well. He writes: "This morning, I found nothing on my usual mainstream media home pages about the national uprising this weekend to protest ICE's murder of Renee Good. I had to go on Facebook to find an aerial photo of the huge protest in NYC. **When I asked a journalist about this, they said, "It's not a story."**

Those four words are gnawing at me. Because, to me, it can only mean that Trump's intimidation of the press actually worked. If those had been MAGA crowds, it would have been front page. Or if there had been violence, it would have been covered. Those are the stories Trump wants the press to cover.

I have a tiny social media following. But when I posted a video from a small-ish city in Connecticut, it got about 30,000 views so far. So, yes, this is a story.

In fact, it's a major story when huge masses of people leave their living rooms with no advance planning on a cold winter day to

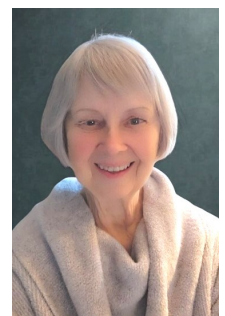
protest government action. You can't tell it with one dramatic front-page photo. But if the protestors were together, it would expand in every direction for miles. (The one place to see the compiled vastness of the protests was *The Rachel Maddow Show*.)

It's also a story that thousands of simultaneous protests were peaceful. It tells you that this was not some extremist activity. It was mainstream Americans who were horrified when they saw video of a young mother speaking generously to an ICE agent, who then shot her in the face and spewed obscenity at her after she was dead. And there was outrage at a president and vice president who accused the victim of being a domestic terrorist.

Maybe the mainstream media is ignoring a national story because they're overcompensating for accusations of liberal bias, to the point where they ignore stories that are just American—not liberal or conservative. Or maybe they fear financial repercussions if they cover the resistance to the government's actions. Or maybe it's some other failure of courage or insight.

In any case, Trump has succeeded this morning at redirecting the press with his bogus attack on Jerome Powell. The press gave him once again exactly what he wanted—the top headline.

I know I'm not the only one who hopes the mainstream press will somehow find a way to rediscover its integrity and clarity. And I suspect that among the thousands who put on their winter coats and marched this weekend—and the thousands who sympathized but didn't make it to the streets—there are many who agree with me."



Judy Northrop

The moment we no longer have a free press, anything can happen. What makes it possible for a totalitarian or any other dictatorship to rule is that people are not informed. ... If everybody always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer.

~ Hannah Arendt

Wait! There's More!



Welcome Our Newest Members

Irene Borgfeldt

Alison Bok

Sue Brown

Pat Cameron

Jo Ann Cohen-Bleu

Donna & Larry Halperin

Donna Kish

Janis Lang

Wes McNeel

Blair Mitchell

Caren Myers

Doris Palardy

Jo Panitch

Edele Singer

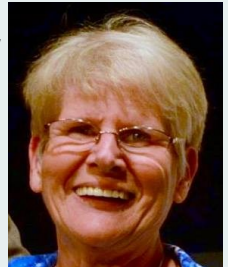
Marcia Goldstein shared this reflection on Norman Lear, written by his daughter, Kate Lear. Lear passed away in December of 2023 at the age of 101.

Kate Lear writes: “As a writer and producer, my father was unwavering in his conviction that airing our differences and finding common ground would foster empathy and promote healing. In his television shows, he famously placed his characters in the middle of discussions about race, gender, poverty, and social justice, hoping to bring us closer to one another by highlighting our connections as human beings. In *All In The Family*, when Archie’s conservatism came up against Mike’s progressive ideas, angry words flew back and forth but there was an underpinning of love that took away the sting for the audience. In 1982, he produced a television special called *I Love Liberty*, co-chaired by Lady Bird Johnson and Gerald Ford, that featured actors and politicians from all over the political spectrum. And as an activist and founder of People For The American Way, his strategy was always to expand the tent through provocative yet honest communication about difficult issues. He never stopped trying to smooth out our differences.”

Read the full article at [My Father’s America | People For.](#)

In case you missed it! Leslie El-Sayad reminds us that our **Affordable Housing Committee** is collecting items for **OCRRN (Orange County Rapid Response Network)**.

Leslie has spoken with OCRRN to discern exactly how our club could support their efforts. She was told that ongoing and pressing needs include diapers (sizes 5 and 6), toilet paper, and cleaning supplies, including dish soap.



Leslie El-Sayad

Bring donations to our February and March meetings or drop them off at 68 Calle Aragon, Unit D. Put them in the beach buggy on the patio.

To Mask Or Not To Mask...

The Flu and respiratory illnesses this year seem to be especially virulent. For seniors, it’s even more so.

Regarding face masks, please decide for yourself, as being in a closed environment with a group increases the risk of getting sick.

If you are coughing, for whatever reason, please wear a mask so that others feel safe.

If you do not have a mask, there will be one available for you at the Membership Table near the entry. Just ask Sue Snyder or any of the staff at that table.

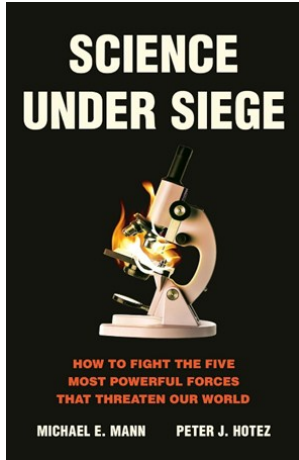
If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, please stay home to minimize the risk to your community.

Let’s take care of each other!

Looking for a nearby street protest to join? They often pop up without a lot of advance notice and are increasingly frequent, making it hard to publish a month ahead of time. To find info on local protests, check social media (Twitter/X, Facebook groups) for updates in real time and visit websites like [Mobilize.us](#), [Indivisible OC](#), and [Laguna Woods Democratic Club](#) for organized events.

Remember to protest as safely as possible: [How to Protest Safely in the Age of Surveillance](#).

The Reading Nook



*This important book has drawn the attention of two of our members. **Joe Siry** has recommended it for this month's reading and provides his commentary. It will also be reviewed at a live meeting later this year by **Joel Goldstein**.*

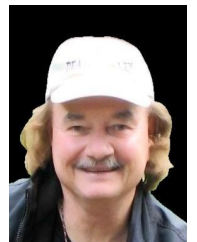
Joe Siry writes: A scathing indictment of widespread, influential, and unreflective current attitudes about scientific research findings has immobilized effective efforts in public health and climate science, according to Michael Mann and Peter Hotez, in their new book. Briefly, their concern is that in a definitively warming world, the risks posed by resurgent pandemics against a deteriorating public health system in the US—the third largest nation and single greatest per capita consumer on Earth—will undermine the nation's leadership and competitive edge. In an ever more precarious international order characterized by aggressive military invasions and cyber-warfare, dictatorships are fostering credible disinformation to disable their adversaries. By sowing discord among the media, public perception is more than clouded.

The authors contend that “72 percent of Americans cannot name a living scientist (while more than half cannot name a research institution).” This remarkable fact, given the technologically sophisticated world we relish, reveals a prevailing schizophrenia in the popular imagination. We live in a “knowledge-free” society that relies heavily, if not exclusively, on scientific knowledge gleaned from experimentation, research, and discovery. From saving lives through medical therapies to creating gadgets that save time and convey communication vital to commercial success, science sustains our daily existence, despite our ignorance of its presence. “Ghost in the machine” is an ample phrase suggesting how hidden the role of research and experimentation has improved, enriched, and lengthened our lives. The loss of the magazine, *Popular Science*, after 150 years of publication, is but one indicator of our prevailing plight of anti-intellectual and pseudoscientific discourse replacing evidence-based discussion of the public good.

The spread of disease is but one example now of the gravity of these authors' jeremiad. They call the public's attention to the risks posed to our children's health by “accelerating vaccine hesitancy in much of the US population.” From recent history, they glean a disturbing propensity of the public to believe in nonsense. “The Coronavirus is the common cold, folks,” the late radio jock, Rush Limbaugh, shouted to a gullible listening audience, which was then fed by television media to eyes and ears around evening dinner tables. Over a million deaths later in the US alone, prominent TV personalities still insist that the pandemic response was a “woke example” of the “nanny-state” writ large. The authors remind us “as the denialism-induced body count continued to rise”... “This dangerously misguided framing quickly spread,” particularly among the audience for the most-watched cable news network (38 percent of Americans tuned to it in 2025).

Faced with direct assaults on scientists, health practitioners, and even climatologists, these practitioners offer a path not yet taken as they “recognize that both denial and despair can lead to...disengagement and inaction.” They insist the “tide of anti-science” and the “juggernaut of civilization-threatening” media fostered disinformation can be effectively countered. “We can do this if we garner the political will,” they insist. Literally, their battle plan to take back the “evidence-based” dialogue they imagine we once cherished is composed of four steps. Penalizing those who misinform us is their initial assault on petrostates, corporations, and media-moguls. Next, “pressure the plutocrats” by voicing your opposition to distorted “doom and despair” arguments wielded by promoters of self-enriching policies at public expense. They also note that the commonweal cannot be protected unless the media is held legally accountable. They finally abjure that “ordinary citizens are the key actors in a democratic system.” Suggesting in 2024 that, despite the close election, Western states passed climate initiatives to reduce the risks from rapidly rising heat-trapping gas pollution.

Challenging the lay public to demand better health care and insist on science education in all schools, Mann and Hotez—though scarred by threats, lawsuits, and Congressional ridicule—argue that the safe world we are inclined to love without comprehending is ours to revive by resistance. The truism that “**knowledge is power**” holds true today as it did four hundred years ago when used by Sir Francis Bacon. The fundamental, self-evident truth that “ignorance is bliss” is a lie perpetrated on the gullible to hide the risks of loss. Liberty for a free people means we must know how to spread evidence-based learning to rescue our future from past errors.



Joe Siry



Think About It

In all history, there is no war which was not hatched by the governments, the governments alone, independent of the interests of the people, to whom war is always pernicious even when successful.
~ *Leo Tolstoy*

True peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice.

~ *Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.
~ *Mark Twain*

If people don't have an understanding of what science is and what scientists do, then they can tend to think that global warming, for example, is just a matter of opinion.
~ *Brian Cox*

A government becomes dangerous the moment it convinces citizens that obedience is moral. ~ *Albert Camus*

It's not just clashes between protesters and ICE; it's an attack on basic rights that we've taken for granted. ~ *Jon Collins, Minnesota Public Radio reporter*

Our world is not divided by race, color, gender, or religion. Our world is divided into wise people and fools. And fools divide themselves by race, color, gender, or religion.
~ *Nelson Mandela*

The strength and powers of despotism consist wholly in the fear of resisting it.
~ *Thomas Paine*

You don't need a weatherman to tell you which way the wind is blowing.
~ *Bob Dylan*

Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate. ~ *Edward W. Said*

Habeas corpus is the foundational right that separates free societies like America from police states like North Korea.
~ *Heather Cox Richardson*

The death of human empathy is one of the earliest and most telling signs of a culture about to fall into barbarism.
~ *Hannah Arendt*

"The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command."
~ *George Orwell, 1984*

Real poverty is not just the lack of food, shelter, and clothing. Real poverty is the belief that the purpose of life is acquiring wealth and owning things. Real wealth is not the possession of property but the recognition that our deepest need, as human beings, is to keep developing our natural and acquired powers and to relate to other human beings.
~ *Grace Lee Boggs*

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. ~ *Aristotle*

Contact your State Legislators!

Click on the links below where you can express your views

CA State Assembly Member:

[Diane Dixon](#)

CA State Senator:

[Steven Choi](#)

Contact your US Senators & Representative!

Click on the links below where you can express your views

Senator: [Alex Padilla](#)

Senator: [Adam Schiff](#)

Representative: [Young Kim](#) (40th District)

Representative: [Dave Min](#) (47th District)

Not everyone (even in Laguna Woods Village) has the same federal and state legislators. As a result of the 2020 Census, most of Laguna Woods is in the 40th Congressional District (though some are in the 47th District), the 72nd State Assembly District, and the 37th State Senate District. To be sure who represents you, [click here](#) to find out.

Unsure about how to email your elected representatives about issues that matter?

You aren't alone! Lots of people have strong concerns about issues like abortion, fair voting, war and military spending, the environment, humane treatment of migrants, immigration, etc. But they aren't sure what to say—or if their comments make any difference at all.

First, your comments to your elected representatives **DO** make a difference! According to the League of Women Voters, your representatives look forward to the views of their voters, and emails and phone calls are the best indication of what those voters are thinking. Voters get top priority with most elected officials.

The names above serve **ALL** of their constituents regardless of their party affiliation! It is important that they hear from us **often** about our concerns and

our expectations. **When you contact the office of a legislator, you only need to write or say a couple sentences about what policy or legislation it is that you are for or against. The staff just wants to know what side of an issue you are on and that is what they record.**

If you click on the links above, you will usually come to a prepared email template that makes it easy for you to enter your information and choose the topic you wish to comment on.

Here are some email guidelines:

I am your constituent and I am concerned about [enter your concern]. If it is a specific piece of legislation you are urging them to either vote for or against, enter the bill number, if possible. Briefly explain why you are concerned about the issue or legislation. Don't forget to thank them for listening. And ALWAYS ask for a response.

Public servants should be focused on serving the public—not any special interest group—and good governance should be an expectation, not an exception. ~ Abigail Spanberger

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Quicklinks

E-mail:

cclagunawoodsvillage@gmail.com

Website:

bit.ly/concernedseniors

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MEMBER REGISTRATION FORM
Membership runs for the calendar year, January 1 to December 31, each year
**Membership dues paid on or after October 1 each year
will include the following year as a paid membership**

TODAY'S DATE: _____ If paying in person, cash is accepted.
If paying by mail, only checks are accepted.

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (CHECK ONLY ONE BOX): ☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

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I am enclosing an **extra** contribution in the amount of _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

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We are pleased to have you with us! What most appeals to you about Concerned Citizens?

If you would like more information about any of the work groups, check boxes below:

- ☐ Affordable Housing/Housing Insecurity ☐ Environment ☐ Budget/Finance
☐ Hospitality ☐ Membership ☐ Peace ☐ Publicity ☐ Newsletter

If submitting by mail, send this form and A CHECK (no cash) payable to CCLWV to:
Concerned Citizens of Laguna Woods Village
24310 Moulton Parkway, Suite O, Box 119
Laguna Woods, CA 92637