



LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Interleague Organization — Beach Cities • Claremont Area • East San Gabriel Valley • Glendale-Burbank • Long Beach Area
Los Angeles • Palos Verdes Peninsula-San Pedro • Pasadena Area • Santa Monica • Torrance • Whittier

Editor: Mary Ellen Barnes Website:<http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org> Email:LWVLACounty@msn.com Feb/March 2011

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Calendar 2011

Wed., March 2	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - Whittier
Friday, March 18	Ed Source Spring Forum - Hyatt Regency Irvine
Thurs., March 24	UN Mini Conference
Saturday, March 26	LWV/LAC Convention, 9:00AM - 12 noon at Recreation Park Golf Course, Long Beach
Wed., April 6	County Board Meeting, 9:30 AM
Sun., May 1	Consensus Reports due from Local Leagues
Fri.-Sun. May 13 - 15	LWVC Convention in Ventura

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From the President's Desk...

Wow. We had a great Winter League Day on the State budget and a record turnout with over 90 members and guests. As we played the Budget Game, we realized that choices for balancing the budget are limited. Thanks to Sally Seven and Jack Sullivan for leading the game. We were pleased to have Jean Ross, Executive Director of the California Budget Project, as our main speaker. She noted that with several years of deficit budgets, all the easy fixes are gone. Read Jack Sullivan's remarks on Winter League Day in this Voter. You can follow budget developments on the California Budget Project website.

I hope most of you are in the midst of your jail study meetings, or are about to begin. The consensus reports are due in May, so you have some time left. If you have questions or concerns, call one of our terrific study chairs – Betsey Coffman and Vi Iunergich.

We'll be receiving instructions relating to the LWVUS study on the role of the federal government in education. As you start gearing up for this important study, please check out the resources that EdSource provides for your use. Most of the material is online, or you can subscribe to receive hard copies. The coming EdSource conference is a good way to learn more about education issues (see box in this Voter with conference information).

Some local Leagues will be handling election activities in March, April and/or June. Please remember that LWVC has a wonderful election resource – Smart Voter. But this resource is only really useful if the information is posted and if people know about it. So be sure candidates in your communities enter their information. Then find ways to promote Smart Voter to the public.

2011 marks the 100th year that women in California have had the vote. The measure granting women the right to vote in California was proposed by the State Legislature and approved by voters in a referendum held as part of a special election on 10 October 1911. I hope many of you are following the postings on California: 100 Years of Women Voting. Leagues are posting cartoons, references to films and songs, and events they are holding to celebrate this anniversary.

Mark your calendars for the County Convention on March 26, 2011. It will be in Long Beach at the Park Golf Course, 9 am to 12 noon. The flyer with the registration form is in this Voter. See you there!

Nancy

34th Annual EdSource Forum on California Education Policy

The Future for Public Education in California

Friday, March 18, 2011

Hyatt Regency Irvine

8:30 am to 3:00 pm

\$80 for EdSource Annual Information Service subscribers

\$95 for non-subscribers

Go to www.edsource.org to register, or call 650-917-9481

Winter League Day Recap John Sullivan, LWV/LAC

California continues to run significant budget deficits and balancing the state budget has been an on-going topic of discussion, analysis and conflict. To help League members keep abreast of this discussion, the LWV/LAC County League Day on January 29th was devoted to the state budget.

During the morning session, Sally Seven and I facilitated an exploration of the California Budget Challenge developed by NEXT 10. The Budget Challenge is a game which allows players to work their way through budget choices as they attempt to reach a balanced budget. The game presents users with policy options both for state expenditures and for state revenue. Expenditures include education (both K-14 and the UC and CSU systems), health care, environment, human services, criminal justice, pensions, and jobs. Revenue options include the income tax, corporate tax, sales tax, car tax, and property tax.

We organized the play so that each table in the room had to select a policy choice from one of the options available. Our goal was to insure that the members of each table had an opportunity to make input into "our" state budget. At the start of the game, the group was faced with a \$22 billion deficit. By making judicious policy choices, the group got the deficit down to about \$2 billion. This was not at all bad for a morning's work by 80+ people! In the process of playing the game, the group also noted that it did not present them with options they would have liked to see.

For example, on the health care sector, there was no option for the "single payer" approach which many argue would save a great deal in health care expenditures. There were a number of other interesting suggestions and much interesting discussion around those suggestions.

All-in-all, the audience did get well engaged in the game and seemed to find it challenging.

The keynote speaker for the day was Jean Ross, Executive Director of the California Budget Project. She presented an overview of the budget situation and of newly elected governor Brown's proposed budget for 2011-2012. Governor Brown's budget is a combination of extending the 2009 tax increases and of the cutting of some programs. Child care is one area that would be cut. Brown also proposes to close corporate tax loopholes and to cut redevelopment agencies and enterprise zones. Many observers argue that neither of these options does much to help local economies. Of course, redevelopment agencies and enterprise zones have their supporters who argue that they facilitate cities getting rid of blighted areas, among other things.

As it currently stands, Gov. Brown's budget proposal does have some significant implications for LA County (LA Times, 2/7/11). The County Supervisors are quite concerned about that part of Brown's proposal that involves transferring responsibility for programs such as mental health, child welfare services, and substance abuse programs from the state to the county. If the governor shifts both programs and funds, the supervisors wonder where the savings will be. If the governor does not shift funds along with the programs, it is likely that the County would not have the money to absorb those programs in the short run. In addition, Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley is concerned about the Governor's plan to send 37,000 non-violent offenders back to counties to serve their terms locally. Cooley feels that this would be a danger to public safety in L. A. County.

Jean Ross ended her remarks by noting that Governor Brown's budget looks a lot like Governor Pete Wilson's 1991 budget. That is, it is a combination of both cuts in programs and tax increases.

Continued at bottom of page 4

NATURAL RESOURCE NOTES

John Sullivan, LWV/LAC

California's water issues continue to be the focus of attention and analysis. In an article in *High Country News* (HCN, 12/20/10) about California's water woes, Matt Jenkins concludes by noting the following: "Underneath all of this, though, lies another grim reality. Nothing can be done in California that will keep its farms and big cities thriving at today's levels and also keep the fish and the Delta alive." The "all of this" he refers to is the story he tells of conflict over the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta and California's water. This story involves agribusiness which needs water to grow crops, cities which need water for people, lawns, and industry, and fish (i.e., the environment) which need water to survive. It is important to note that these three groups do not reside in geographically distinct places but are, rather, spread throughout the state.

But, it might be asked, did not southern California get lots of rain in December? The answer is yes. For calendar year 2010, L. A. received a total of 23.09 inches of rain with 10.23 inches falling in December alone. That is a lot of rain for the basin. The long-term average for L. A. is 15.01 inches. But, as Emily Green notes (*LA Times*, 2/8/11), we should not be fooled by this apparent abundance of water. We still live way beyond our local means and need 50% of the water we consume to come from other geographical regions. In addition, it is also important to note that much of the rain that fell in the L. A. basin in December was flushed out to the ocean through our extensive storm drain system. There is not storage capacity for such a sudden inflow of water. In the Sierra Nevada Mountains, water managers had to release water from dams to make room for the next possible storm. Much of that water went to the ocean via the S. F. Bay.

The story that Jenkins tells in the HCN article is one of tensions between the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and economic growth. Can we continue to grow at current rates in business and farm production, population, and homes and still enjoy a healthy Delta? The answer would seem to be no. Although diversions from the Delta are not the only cause of decline there, they are a major contributor. One proposed solution, an "isolated facility" (i.e., a

Peripheral Canal) to carry water around the Delta so the pumps can be shut off, might avoid conflict with the ESA but would likely change the Delta into a much more saline environment. It is not clear if salmon and other fish could survive such reduced flows of fresh water and a much higher salinity. It is also not clear that farmers and other business activities in the Delta could live with such a change.

Jenkins' analysis leads to an important and difficult question: Is California approaching a significant limit to growth in the form of an over-committed water supply? Can we find a way to stretch our water supplies so that urban folks, farmers, and fish can all survive together? Or do we have to make some radical adjustment in which there will be winners and losers? Do we, for example, ramp up diversions from the Delta and let fish and farming in the Delta die? Do southern Californians rip out their lawns and get used to cacti in the front yard? Or do farmers in the San Joaquin Valley learn to live with lower profits and the rest of us purchase fruits and vegetables from Latin America?

Winter League Day Recap (continued from page 3)

There will continue to be much discussion and debate on the Brown budget. It is important to remember that an important element of Brown's proposal is a vote by the electorate on extending the 2009 tax increases. It is not yet clear if the legislature will go along with the governor and approve such an election. You can keep informed on the budget debate at the following links:

1. The California Budget Challenge Game: <http://www.next10.org/>. The game is quite easy to play and contains a great deal of supplementary information on various budget issues. You will also find reports on the State's budget and economy.
2. The California Budget Project: <http://www.cbp.org/>. This site also has a number of reports and analyses on the State economy and budget. Recently CBP published a critical analysis of enterprise zones.
3. Legislative Analysts Office also contains relevant reports on the State budget. The LAO recently issued a report on governor brown's budget and will also issue a report on the so-called "May revise" of Brown's budget. You can find the LAO at: <http://www.lao.ca.gov/laoapp/main.aspx>

Adopting a California Criminal Justice Position by Concurrence

Charlotte Sumrow-Pirch, LWV Orange Coast

Before the LWV state convention in 2009, several league members put together an ad hoc committee to lobby for a study of the California Prison System. Unfortunately we failed to convince 3/5 of the delegates to approve the study. Therefore the committee will propose at the state convention (May 12-15, 2011, in Ventura) that the delegates adopt a position on the California Criminal Justice position by concurrence.

Leagues in 30 states have studied their systems and adopted positions, but California has none. For the proposed concurrence position we can use only one League's position or take portions of positions from several Leagues. We will try to formulate a position that is as comprehensive as possible. We will have a the final version 60 days prior to the convention.

The California League has a lengthy position on Solid Waste Management BUT does not have a single position on the Criminal Justice system, aside from our Juvenile Justice position. Because the League does not have a position on the prison, court or probation system, we cannot take action when legislation arises in either house or from the governor. The budget for the prison system alone consumes over \$25 billion a year (2003-4)!! Yet the League has no voice.

The system's medical services are currently in federal receivership, it is expected that the entire system will be under receivership pending the outcome of several cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Adopting a position by concurrence means that we will have a position that can be used immediately to take action on any and all proposals that will be put forward by our newly elected Governor and Attorney General.

The Governor's current budget makes substantial changes to the prison system, but the League cannot take action to support or oppose. The League MUST be at the table when decisions are taken on the Criminal Justice System.

For those who feel that our members are not educated on the system, the committee has committed to provide papers to be published in local *Voters* to educate members. The members of the committee respectfully ask that those Leagues who will send delegates to the convention please support adoption of a Criminal Justice System position by concurrence.

Voter Service Report by Margo Reeg, LWC/LAC 2nd V.P.

CITY OF COMMERCE COUNCIL FORUM

The Whittier League conducted a Candidate Forum for the City Council election in Commerce on January 26. Of the 8 candidates running for 2 seats, seven participated in the forum. Questions from the Commerce Industrial Council and the audience addressed issues of traffic, parking, expansion of business and industry in Commerce, budget priorities and city amenities. Two sheriff's deputies, Jose Acero and George Kevanian are running as a slate as are Joe Aguilar, the incumbent, and Denise Robles. Jaime Valencia, Gordy Cisneros and Elizabeth Flores also participated in the forum. Shawn Estrada did not attend.

The LA County League was invited by the Commerce Industrial Council to conduct the forum as the League had done in 2007 and 2008. **The Whittier League** provided all the staff for this year's forum, whereas responsibilities were shared among several Leagues previously.

CITY OF BELL COUNCIL FORUM

The LA County LWV has been asked by the Bell Chamber of Commerce to conduct another set of Forums for Bell City Council during the first week of March. Previous forums during the first week of February were hosted by the Bell Activists to Stop the Abuse (BASTA) with the **LA County and LA Leagues** serving as facilitators and using League rules. Another series in the 3rd week of February were convened by the California Community Foundation in conjunction with NALEO, Univision, La Opinion, and Assemblyman Lara. The final set of forums would target concerns of the business community and the business climate in Bell. **LWVWhittier** will be involved if the forums take place.



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49th Annual Convention

Saturday, March 26, 2011

9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

To be announced

Recreation Park Golf Course

**5001 Deukmejian Drive
Long Beach, CA 90804
Phone: 562.494.5000**

CONVENTION KITS for delegates will be mailed to Local League Presidents by the end of February. Additional copies will be available at the meeting.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Directions Heading 405 Southbound or 605 Southbound

Take 22 West/7th Street Exit, Turn Right On Park Ave, Turn Right On Deukmejian Drive, Continue Past Stop Sign Into the Golf Course.

Directions Heading 405 Northbound. Take 22 West/7th Street Exit, Turn Right On Park Ave., Turn Right On Deukmejian Drive, Continue Past Stop Sign into the Golf Course.

✂.....

Send form and check payable to **LWV/LAC**

Mail to LWV/LAC Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut Ave., Burbank 91501

League Name _____

Please highlight delegates names with a (D).

Name(s) _____

Deadline is March 18, 2011

Light Breakfast Reservations # _____ @ \$20.00 = Total \$ _____ Food Allergies # _____

If Postmarked After March 18th

Light Breakfast Reservations # _____ @ \$25.00 = Total _____



Local Redistricting in California

Who is responsible for local redistricting and what is the process?

What is local redistricting? What impact does it have on me?

All local governments that *elect by district* must, every ten years, redraw their district lines to assure that all districts have nearly equal population.

Local redistricting involves any county, city, school district, community college district or special district that is divided into districts or divisions. These local government agencies are required to review their current district boundaries with new population figures from the 2010 census and engage in a redistricting process right along with the state.*

If districts are drawn that keep communities intact, people are better able to elect representatives who will further their interests. Frequently, local redistricting draws little attention. But it is no less important for citizens to be represented and have fair districts drawn at the local level than it is at the state and federal level.

**Some charter cities use the mid-decade federal census or an official city census as specified in their charters.*

Who is responsible for local redistricting?

The [California Elections Code, Division 21](#) provides the statutory basis for redrawing the districts for county supervisors, city council members, and the governing boards of special districts. The [California Education Code](#) provides for redistricting in school and community college districts that elect by trustee areas.

The local governing body (board of supervisors, city council, school board, etc.) is generally responsible for adopting the new district lines. There may be an advisory committee, and for counties there is provision for a commission of elected county officials to do the redistricting if the Board of Supervisors fails to do it by November 1 of the year following the census. Charter cities and counties may set up their own process, such as a separate commission or task force.

Note: The provisions of Propositions 11 and 20 that govern the selection and functioning of the Citizens Redistricting Commission apply only to redistricting of the state Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization and California's Congressional districts.

Do many local agencies elect their governing boards by districts?

The boards of supervisors of almost all 58 counties are elected by district. Charter and general law cities may elect their city councils by districts; approximately 30 do so. The governing boards of many school districts and some special districts are elected by divisions such as trustee areas or wards.

Cities and Counties: Is your city/county a charter government or general law ?

Charter government

In addition to the statutory requirements in the state Elections Code for charter cities and counties, your city or county charter will also have statutory requirements for the redistricting process. Read the charter carefully to find out **WHO** is responsible for redistricting and **HOW** the process is conducted. A few cities have appointed commissions. Many city and county district lines are redrawn by the sitting government body (just as the state and federal districts in California were redrawn by the legislature prior to 2011).

General law cities

The process is outlined in the state [Elections Code, 21600-21606](#).

What is the process?

The important thing to remember is that the redistricting criteria and open meeting notifications mandated for the state redistricting commission do not necessarily apply at the local level. The Brown Act governs meetings of local legislative bodies. Determine exactly **what the rules are** for meeting notices and **how much notice** is mandated for your local government bodies that are involved in redistricting.

Find out *who did the redistricting after the 2000 census* and contact them to learn more about *how the process worked in 2001*. In past redistricting cycles, many local governments and special districts waited to begin their process. Others, as required by law, have to finish by November 1, 2011 (or March 1, 2012 for school and community college districts). Many are starting soon and some have already begun.

How can I participate in local redistricting?

Find out **who is drawing the maps** for districts and what information besides the census they are using to make their determinations about where lines should be drawn. Ask your county registrar and county superintendent of schools. In addition, you can consult your county counsel, city clerk, city attorney, special district managers or legal departments for information about local redistricting.

Regardless of what the rules and notice requirements are, local Leagues can use most of the LWVC redistricting position. You can advocate for an open, transparent process; extensive public input; and the strong standards listed in the LWVC position, including respect for communities of interest.

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity, pluralism and affirmative action.

The League of Women Voters welcomes new members, both men and women, who are citizens of voting age. Associate membership is open to all others.

SUBSCRIBE to the VOTER

Send the information below to be notified of the latest VOTER posted on our website at: <http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

For a hard copy subscription send \$10 to:
LWV/LACounty Treasurer,
427 E. Walnut Avenue, Burbank, CA 91501.

Name _____
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E-mail Address _____

Internet Election Resources

- Smart Voter** www.smartvoter.org
Statewide propositions plus local candidates & issues on your ballot, with extensive Background materials and media links from LWV California Ed Fund
 - LA County Registrar-Recorder** www.lavote.net
Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multilingual voting materials, Locations for Touchscreen early voting
 - Easy Voter Guide** www.easyvoter.org
Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English
 - Secretary of State** www.ss.ca.gov
Official text of ballot measures
 - CA Legislative Analyst** www.lao.ca.gov
Analysis of all ballot measures
 - CA Voter Foundation** www.calvoter.org
Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures
 - CA Budget Project** www.cbp.org
Analyzes the fiscal effects of statewide ballot measures
 - CA Votes.org** www.cavotes.org
The LWVC Education Fund website
- This VOTER is ready for viewing on our website: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org



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