



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 April 2011

LWV / LACounty Board of Directors 2011 - 2012

Executive Board
Nancy Mahr
President

Lois Ledger
First Vice President

Margo Reeg
Second Vice President

Kay White
Secretary

Directors

Joan Arias
Betsey Coffman
Linda Herman
Vi Iungerich
Carlos Medina
Phyllis O'Connor
Sally Seven
Carol Slavin
Jack Sullivan
Georganne Thomsen
Lola Ungar

Calendar 2011

Sun., May 1	Consensus Reports due from Local Leagues
Fri.-Sun. May 13-15	LWVC Convention - Ventura
Tues-Wed, May 24-25	Board Retreat & Meeting - Mary & Joseph Retreat, Rancho Palos Verdes
Wed., June 1	County Board Meeting - 9:30 - 1:30
Sat.-Mon, June 18-20	National Council - Washington D.C.
Wed. July 6	County Board Meeting - 9:30 - 1:30
Sat. July 30	Popovers in Pasadena - 9:30 - 2:00

President's Message	2
Webinars.....	2
Natural Resources Notes.....	3
Green Building Open House in Santa Monica.....	3
LWV City of Los Angeles Film Screening/ Panel Discussion.....	3
Jail Study.....	4
Redistricting.....	5
Privatization in L.A. County.....	6
Citizens' Benefit Bank.....	6
Gwen Cochran Remebrance.....	7
Federal Impact on Education.....	8
L.A. County Hazard Mitigation Town Hall Meeting Flyer.....	9

From the President's Desk...

The County Convention gave us an early look at privatization – one of our national studies for the coming year. Santos Kreimann, Head of the County Department of Beaches and Harbors, commented on the way in which outsourcing has helped his department. We also elected officers and directors for the coming year and approved the County League budget. Thanks to all who attended.

The first of May is the target date for submitting your League's consensus and comments on the County Jail Study. The study committee will develop a position statement based on the reports from Local Leagues. The position will be considered at the March 2012 convention.

There is a great deal happening in the redistricting arena. The Citizens Commission is holding hearings throughout the state. The League needs to be a part of the hearings in the Los Angeles area. Follow the schedule online at www.wedrawthelines.gov.

The County League is tracking the progress on the redistricting for the County supervisorial districts. We hope to have Local Leagues attend meetings held in their areas. You'll be getting more information on this.

We are bereaved with the passing of our long-time treasurer and friend, Gwen Cochran. Please read comments by Georganne Thomsen in this Voter.

March was Women's History Month. It's always important to remember the contributions of the League of Women Voters to the quality and scope of women's lives, both here and abroad. Much has been accomplished in the past – you are a part of our accomplishments in the present and into the future. Thank you.

Nancy



Never been an observer for the League? The LWVC is offering a great opportunity for observer training. Register for a 45 minute Webinar and learn more about the exciting work you can do in person (attending state or local redistricting meetings) or from your home (following the media coverage on the internet, radio, television, or newspapers). **Sign up for free trainings** on [May 4 at 7pm](#), or [June 14 at 10am](#).

Register Now: Webinar on How to Conduct a National Study Thursday, April 21, 3:00 PM Eastern

If you would like to learn more about the process surrounding a national study, we welcome you to [sign up for this webinar](http://lww.na4.acrobat.com/education/event/registration.html) (lww.na4.acrobat.com/education/event/registration.html).

Learn how to help your League get ready to participate in national studies directly from Education Study Committee chair Peg Hill and national Education Fund and Privatization Committee chair Janis McMillen.

Natural Resource Notes John Sullivan, LWV/LAC

The experts were predicting last year that this would be a “La Nina” winter for the L. A. Basin, that is, very dry with little or no rain. That turned out not to be the way things went. In downtown L. A. since July 1, 2010, there have been 19.74 inches of rain according to the National Weather Service. The normal value for that time period is 13.88 inches. Clearly, the Basin experienced a much wetter winter than normal. In addition, California as a whole had a very wet winter. Recent measurements of the snow pack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains showed that the snow-water content was 165% of average. In 2007, the snow-water content in the Sierras was only 40% of average. The high water-content snow pack is good news as Southern California gets a good portion of its water supply for the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The unexpectedly wet winter led Governor Jerry Brown on March 30th to rescind the 3 year old emergency drought declaration. The Governor noted that water was still an important issue and that “...demand for water will always outstrip supply...” (*SFGATE*, 03/31/11) He encouraged people to continue to conserve water. Much of the rainwater that falls in L. A. County is sent directly to the ocean. One option for homeowners is to harvest some of that rainwater. L. A. County has regulations for unincorporated areas (go to <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/> and search for “rainwater harvesting”) and various cities will have local ordinances. Check with city hall before you install a cistern or an above ground barrel to collect rainwater. But consider either as an option to reduce your consumption of imported water and save money on your water bill.

Santa Monica 2011 Green Building Open House

What: As an appetizer to Altbuild 2011, the City of Santa Monica will host its annual Green Building open house. The architect, owner, or other docents will be present to answer questions about the sustainable features of the site and the process they went through. This year's tour includes: the Center for Environmental and Urban Studies at Santa Monica College, the first multi-family project in Southern California to be dual-certified with both LEED and GreenPoint Rated, a project that salvaged 80% of deconstruction materials and uses FSC-certified wood throughout, a LEED Platinum Zero Net Energy home that also makes extensive use of reclaimed material and a green tenant improvement retail project to house a sustainable product offered by one of the leading sustainable companies.

When: Saturday April 16th, 2011

Time: 10am-3pm

Where: One week before the tour, we will email attendees with a map to the tour locations

Cost: Free!

Note: Some of the homes are completed and occupied, so please be respectful of the owners who have graciously invited you in to learn from their home. As always, you will be entering at your own risk, so please be careful.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

<http://www.eventbrite.com/event/1475927539>

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles Presents A Film Screening & Panel Discussion Event Wed May 11 630pm Barnsdall Gallery Theatre

Featuring the award winning documentary, *Climate Refugees* and a video short from Oxfam America, *Sisters on the Planet*. *Climate Refugees* puts a human face on the impacts of climate change already occurring and is the most talked about film on our environment since *An Inconvenient Truth*. The evening begins with a 630pm reception. Screening starts at 7pm and is immediately followed by a panel discussion of local climate policy experts. Come hear what we Angelenos can do now to mitigate our carbon footprint.

REGISTER & More information: www.lwvlosangeles.org . Admission \$10 / Students \$5

JAIL STUDY - It's Time to Put It All on the Table Or ...You Reap What You Sow - By Vi Iugerich

It is time to finish the consensus for the Jail Study. I hope all members are participating with their local Leagues and will have their reports in by May 1st. We need your thoughtful and wise opinions.

Some Leagues are comparing LA to other cities. So let us continue with these thoughts.

Here are some insights from the Vera Institute (they are doing a three year study on the LA Jails but have not issued their report for us yet. The following is material from their web site of a study they did (October 2010) on prison overcrowding and the fiscal crisis.

Because of California policy and laws, a large number of inmates are being sent back to prison for parole violations. In 2008 nearly 55% of state prison admissions were the result of parole revocations with 43 % of these for technical parole violations. (i.e. a violation of the rules which govern parole such as missing a drug test or a probation appointment, without the commission of a new crime.)

Other states are changing or modifying laws which do not impact citizen safety and which save money. Many of these changes are supported by research and evidence that mandatory supervision and other alternatives are more effective and cost efficient. Some of their ideas are used somewhat in LA but not to the full extent they could be used, including the following:

- Reclassifying crimes by raising the threshold dollar amounts for property crimes.
- Reducing penalties associated with certain types of drug possession.
- Allowing community punishment rather than jail-time.
- For parole violators (with technical violations) an increase in the probationary period for up to one year.
- Changing sentences to probation instead of any incarceration for misdemeanors and some non-violent felonies.
- Alternative sentencing programs from house arrest to drug diversion programs.
- Relaxing mandatory sentences such as the 5 year sentence for first time crack cocaine possession.

New York relaxed mandatory sentences for drug offences and left it to discretion of the judge in low level drug use. Other states have also relaxed mandatory sentences for drug offences such as drugs near a school etc., leaving guidelines for a judge.

Restructuring conditions of release for certain offenses including home confinement, community supervision and work-release programs.

Drug courts reduce recidivism by an average of 8-26 percent with the best programs reducing crime by 35% to 40% (often suspending sentencing upon successful completion of a program).

Veteran's courts which combine a drug treatment program with mental health services—(one in five veterans that served in Iraq or Afghanistan report symptoms of either PTSD or depression and one in four ages 18-25 meet the criteria for substance abuse).

California policies and laws also affect the homeless. For a while, mandatory arrests of the homeless for minor laws such as jaywalking also fill the jails under the misguided notion that if you take care of the little crimes the big ones won't happen. However, most crime statistics are actually driven by the population of young men—as this population decreases so does crime.

Another fix is to release the indigent and poor on their own recognizance instead of holding them in jails (The bail bondsmen lobbies are very much against this idea)

You may read or hear about other ideas—bring them with you to the Jail Study Meetings.

Redistricting - Notes by Sally Seven

The decennial redistricting for California, this time with a public commission doing the line-drawing, is underway. Fortunately for those of us living in Claremont, the full Commission met here in town in mid-February. Observing the Commission in session was interesting.

The focus of the Claremont sessions was process – choosing support consultants and deciding whether or not to go single-source. The decision finally was to go single-source for support for the civic engagement [public outreach] functions and then to put out an RFP to get competing offers for line-drawers, a slower process.

The Center for Collaborative Policy [CSU, Sacramento] was selected to help the Commission with the public outreach meetings. An existing relationship seemed to be in place and was continued.

The Commission decided to divide the state into nine regions for purposes of outreach. Most of the nine regions had about 3 or 4 million people. Region IV [LA area] has the largest population, about 9.8 million, and Region V [Ventura area] the fewest, about 1.5 million. The next largest is the San Francisco area [5.3 million] and the next smallest, San Jose, about 2.5 million. Note that Region IV is more than six times the population of Region V.

The difficulty of operating with fourteen members just becoming acquainted and learning to work with one another seemed to be making it a slow process. The Commission Executive Director, Dan Claypool, had been working on policy statements required under the Voters First Act and was attentively offering counsel as needed throughout the public meetings.

Karin MacDonald, Director of the Statewide Data Base, was an active participant in the Friday meetings. Propositions 11 and 20 direct that the Commission have access to this data base, However, there are problems in getting access to it, since the President's office [at UC Berkeley where it is housed] had transferred the funds, allocated by the Legislature for the maintenance of the database, to the President's own office account.

There was relatively little discussion of any actual line drawing of districts. Clearly, it is early in the process. Staffing and scheduling seem to be consuming most of the attention at this point. Commissioners were very aware of the need to post an agenda 14 days before a meeting, and the time between Commission meetings is a complication.

The Commission took great pains to allow public comment frequently throughout the sessions; concern for the Brown Act was clear. Openness and transparency seemed well respected in comments and process. Members of the public seemed involved and interested.

I encourage you to watch for the schedule of future meetings and attend whenever you can. The real work of establishing district boundaries that serve the public, rather than some specific private interest, lies ahead; it deserves our attention.

Is Privatization a Useful Tool?

A Presentation by Santos H. Kreimann, Director of
L.A. County Department of Beaches and Harbors
by Joan Arias

Director Kreimann gave the County League of Women Voters an interesting prelude to the new National Study of Privatization by describing the way the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors has implemented privatization programs at the Marina del Rey Harbor area. The department is small (256 employees) with a \$60 Million budget divided between the Marina and the Beach areas and manages, through its privatization programs, to return money to the general fund each year; this year Mr. Kreimann estimates the Department will return \$18 Million. The Department services 52 million visitors and is responsible for 1200 acres and 47,000 wet slips plus apartments, hotels, shops and other resources. Marina del Rey is undergoing significant redevelopment, much of it involving projects that are privatized.

Mr. Kreimann gave the following definition of privatization: “the transfer of ownership or control of government assets or functions to private entities.” He noted that there is a great deal of pressure these days to privatize for financial reasons and to improve efficiency and service.

According to Mr. Kreimann, the benefits of privatization are: cash infusions to the County, risk transfer from the County to developers, expert know-how that the County does not have in house, quality of life enhancements, cost reductions and job creation. Such services to the public as food preparation and sales, equipment rentals on beaches, cleaning and maintenance have been privatized to the benefit of the County.

In answer to questions, he described the requirements for developers and other projects around the Los Angeles area: the Hollywood/Wilshire Public Health Center and Los Angeles Free Clinic Partnership, the Music Center and Disney Concert Hall Maintenance and the Grand Avenue Redevelopment and Construction of Civic Parks project.

Mr. Kreimann's presentation served as an excellent introduction to the subject of privatization and left us with a great deal to think about as we begin our study.

A Citizens' Benefit Bank

By Sally Seven

A “citizens’ benefit bank” [CBB] may be a new concept for you, but it is something that I believe deserves our attention. In 1919, the state of North Dakota established such a bank with \$2 million. Its mission was to provide “quality, sound financial services that promote agriculture, commerce, and industry in North Dakota.” Today its capital is up to \$270 million, it continues to hold all monies of the state and of state institutions. It operates to benefit the state and its citizens and is the only state-owned bank in the country.

In 1945, the Bank of North Dakota [BND] started transferring profits from the bank’s operations to the state’s general fund. Since that time, the transfer of funds has amounted to \$555 million. Interestingly, North Dakota has a balanced budget and a projected surplus for 2011.

BND has express lending authority for the purchase or acquisition of bank stock, for acquiring or refinancing farm real estate, and for assisting with post-secondary education costs. All other institutional lending in the state is done through participation with a bank, savings and loan association, credit union, or Farm Credit Services).” BND has special authority to assist other financial institutions to stimulate economic development in the state. Thus, other banks in the state see BND as support, not competition.

Establishing a citizens’ benefit bank deserves consideration by other states since the public interest seems too often to lose in a competition with private profit.

A wider implementation of citizens’ benefit banks would seem to be a positive step if public good is the criterion. In five states, candidates for governor (e.g., Bill Bradbury in Oregon) included creating a CBB as part of their platforms. Los Angeles County is larger than North Dakota. Perhaps a CBB could be part of our future.

Gwen Cochran



Gwen Cochran, member of the LWV/LAC Board of Directors, passed away on March 2, 2011, at her home in Burbank. Members throughout the county will miss her warm greeting as she welcomed them to County League events. Gwen was also respected for her meticulous and prudent stewardship of League resources over the last 10 years as Treasurer. She came on the County Board in 1991 serving first on the Child and Foster Care study committees.

A long-time member of LWV-Glendale/Burbank, Gwen had a passion for good government and participated in many studies as well as voter service and advocacy activities. In addition to League, for the last 18 years, Gwen was a weekly volunteer at the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs office in downtown. She was always a willing worker wherever she was needed.

It was my privilege and great pleasure to have worked with Gwen in League for more than 25 years. For all of her many League Friends, it won't be the same without her.

Gwen's family has indicated that any who wish to make a donation in Gwen's name, should do so to the Burbank Temporary Aid Center or the Glendale/Burbank LWV.

- Georganne Thomsen

HOW THE FEDS IMPACT OUR KIDS' EDUCATION

What is the purpose of federal funding of public schools?

What are the pros & cons of No Child Left Behind?

What does the future hold?

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2011

7:00 - 8:30 PM

REDONDO BEACH WOMAN'S CLUB

400 SOUTH BROADWAY at Pearl

(one block south of Torrance Blvd.)



LISTEN.....LEARN.....ASK THE EXPERTS

- Dr. Don Brann - Superintendent Emeritus, Wiseburn School District
- Tom Cox - Chief Business Official, Wiseburn School District
- Debbie Johnson - Principal, Lennox Middle School
- Bob Farran - South Bay Director, Special Education

Light refreshments provided

For more information email harriet@beachvoter.org



League of Women Voters
www.beachvoter.org

Sponsored by:



Redondo Beach Woman's Club
www.redondobeachwomensclub.org



County of Los Angeles Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Town Hall Meetings

Disasters

Throughout the history of civilization, natural and human-caused disasters have led to increasing levels of death, injury, property damage, and interruption of business and government services. The toll on families and individuals can be immense and damaged businesses can fail or decrease in their abilities to contribute to the economy. The time, money, and effort to respond to and recover from these disasters also diverts public resources and attention from other important programs and problems.

DMA 2000

Recognizing the consequences of disasters and the need to reduce the impacts of natural and human-caused hazards, the U. S. Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) which mandates the preparation of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan by each state and local government. In 2005, the County of Los Angeles prepared and received approval, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), of its first All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Because DMA 2000 regulations also identify the need for five-year updates, **an analysis is currently underway to update the County's All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

Public Outreach

A critical component of the plan update process is to involve the public in the planning process. During the 2005 planning process, Public Outreach included a variety of Town Hall meetings, disaster expos, and the distribution of a hazards questionnaire. This year's strategy includes the delivery of six (6) Hazard Mitigation Town Hall meetings to interested citizens. Hazard Mitigation is defined as the actions taken to minimize or eliminate threats associated with hazards. A mitigation plan

includes a thorough analysis of hazards posing a significant threat against the region, a review of vulnerability to those hazards, and the development of past, present, and future "action items" that mitigate the hazards. The County of Los Angeles 2005 Plan identified the following as "high risk" hazards:

- Earthquake
- Flooding
- Tsunami
- Dam Inundation
- Wildland Fire
- Terrorism – Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Utility Loss
- Drought
- Biological/Health Emergencies
- Wastewater and Water Emergencies
- Economic Disruption
- Data/Telecommunications Emergencies
- Civil Unrest

The 2011 mitigation plan update process involves assessing the status and threat of each of the above listed hazards.

Your input is needed to complete this process, as well as to help identify any additional hazards and mitigation strategies.

This year's public outreach will involve the delivery of six Town Hall meetings, utilizing each of the Board of Supervisor Districts. One Town Hall meeting will be delivered in District 1, District 2, District 3, and District 4. Because of the size of District 5, two Town Hall meetings will be delivered.

Please plan on attending one of the listed Town Hall meetings in your area to provide input and participate in the development of the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. The locations, dates, and times are indicated below.

1st Supervisorial District – April 11

Location: Florence Firestone Service Center
7807 S. Compton Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90001

Date: Monday – April 11, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

3rd Supervisorial District – April 26

Location: Diamond X Ranch at King Gillette Ranch
26800 West Mulholland Highway
Calabasas, CA 91302

Date: Tuesday – April 26, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

5th Supervisorial District – April 12

Location: Larry Chimbole Cultural Center
38350 Sierra Highway
Palmdale, CA 93550

Date: Tuesday – April 12, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

2nd Supervisorial District – April 27

Location: A.C. Bilbrew Public Library
150 E. El Segundo Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90061

Date: Wednesday – April 27, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

5th Supervisorial District – April 13

Location: Sports Complex
23920 Valencia Blvd.
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Date: Wednesday – April 13, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

4th Supervisorial District – April 28

Location: Burton Chace Park Community Room
13650 Mindanao Way
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292

Date: Thursday – April 28, 2011

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

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/LAC
28028 Ella Road
Rancho Palos Verdes CA 90275

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

League _____

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

CAVotes.org www.cavotes.org

The LWVC Education Fund website

This **VOTER** is ready for viewing on our website: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org



Nancy Mahr, LWV/LACounty President
28028 Ella Road
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275