



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
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Calendar 2013

- Fri-Sun, May 17-19** LWVC Convention in San Jose
- Tues., May 14** Retreat/Board Meeting, Mary & Joseph Center. RPV
- Wed., June 5** County Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30
- June 14-17** LWVUS Council - Washington DC Area
- Wed. July 3** County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
- Sat. July 27** Popovers in Pasadena 9:30-2:00 Women's City Club

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From the President's Desk...

This is the time of annual meetings – local, state and national. Local conventions are scheduled. The LWVC Convention comes up in May in San Jose. National Council will take place in June. The County League's annual convention was held on March 30, bringing the 2012-13 League year to a close. Eleven local Leagues in Los Angeles County were represented among the 50 attendees. We elected County League Board officers and directors and passed a budget for 2013-14. We also amended the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in order to comply with requirements relating to our application for 501(c)(3) status.

The Convention was pleased to have County Supervisor Don Knabe, 4th District, as our keynote speaker. He commented on County finances and the state budget, the challenges of realignment, cleaning up run-off water, transportation issues – especially in connecting to LAX – and responded to questions. Attendees gave the Supervisor a high rating.

LWV continues to work on many issues. Among National's lobbying efforts are gun safety, election reform measures, and campaign finance. Some issues seem to be continually demand our attention. LWVC is addressing gun control, implementation of the Affordable Care Act, and civic engagement. The State Board is also working on the revisions to our initiative and referendum position based on the state study. That proposed position will be presented at State Convention in May.

On the County level, the board is tracking issues relating to LAX, transportation, health care reform, developments relating to the jail system, mental health, early child development and education, water issues, and the work to develop a new voting system for the County. We are also preparing for the National study on agriculture.

Both State and National Leagues have been sending out Action Alerts, and more will come as the sessions progress. It's important for all of us to respond to these requests and send messages to our legislators on the issues that we are fighting to uphold. This is one of the strengths of our grass-roots tradition and one reason for LWV continuing to have an impact on proposed legislation. Signing up to receive alerts is easy to do on the LWVC and LWVUS websites.

Nancy Mahr



Natural Resources

Jack Sullivan, LWV/LAC

Natural resources issues continue to be important for L. A. County with water and transportation in the forefront. What follows is a brief survey of some of these issues.

Clean Water: When storms hit the L. A. basin, the rain runoff picks up all manner of pollutants (including motor oil and dog droppings) and distributes them throughout the basin and at the beach. The result is polluted lakes and waterways and closed beaches. To deal with this problem, L. A. County sent to each household in the country a mailer containing a form to protest a proposed clean water fee designed to help deal with this pollution problem. The L. A. County Board of Supervisors held a hearing on January 15 to receive feedback on the County's proposal to create a fee to clean up storm water. Among those in attendance at the hearing, there was strong opposition to the fee but there also was some support. However, a majority of households did not return the protest form. If a majority of households had sent in negative votes in response to County's original mailing, the Supervisors probably would have abandoned the planned fee. As it was, a majority did not protest the fee and the supervisors deferred a vote to develop a plan for a vote on the clean water fee. This issue will likely come up later in the spring. You can learn more about the pollution problem and the proposed clean water fee at the County's site at <http://www.lacountycleanwater.org/>.

Drought Persists. The U.S. Drought Monitor issued a report on March 5th and indicated that the drought in the western U. S. persists and may intensify. The drought map indicates that the southern California area can expect abnormally dry weather to moderate drought throughout the area. Thus, it is likely that southern California will have less water from a major source of supply. Efforts at conservation and recycling will continue to be important in the future. You can view the drought map at http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_west.htm.

Water Supply: 1. The Sierra snowpack is a major supply of water for all of California. Snow measurements on January 2 indicated the snowpack at 134% of normal. However, January and February were quite dry in the west and the snowpack has shrunk to 66% of average. The State's reservoirs are at near-average levels. If there is not more rain in the next months, these reservoirs will shrink in the summer. The current forecasts are for little or no rain for the rest of March and April so we will likely continue to feel the effects of the drought. Again, water conservation will be important for people in the L.A. Basin.

2. Poseidon Resources, a private corporation, is hoping to build a seawater desalination plant in Carlsbad and the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) has agreed to buy at least 48,000 acre-feet of water from Poseidon. (An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons.) The cost of this water will be expensive at about \$2000 for an acre foot. Alternative sources now cost less than \$1000 an acre foot. However San Diego now gets a very large portion of its water (about 90%) from Metropolitan Water District and sees desalinated water as an alternative supply. If the Carlsbad facility proves successful, there will likely be proposals for other desal plants between San Diego and San Francisco. As population and demand for water grow, the cost of existing sources of supply will become more expensive and desal will prove to be more competitive. For an overview of the pros and cons of desal for southern California go to <http://www.dcbureau.org/201201046906/natural-resources-news-service/parched-for-water-controversial-southern-california-desalination-pilot-projects.html>.

Population in the News: While it is quite clear to many that population growth can have a negative effect on the environment, one could easily guess that the general public is unaware or unconcerned about this issue. The Center for Biological Diversity conducted a poll that suggests otherwise. (L. A. Times, 3/2/13) The poll showed that 2/3 of the U. S. population believed that population

Natural Resources - continued from page 3

growth was driving some species to extinction, while 59% believe that population growth is an important environmental issue. Further, 54% believe that plans to stabilize population growth would help with environmental problems. Given these attitudes among the general public, one would hope that issues of population growth and distribution would become more of a focus of discussion in the public policy arena. You can learn more about this poll at:

<http://www.dcbureau.org/201201046906/natural-resources-news-service/parched-for-water-controversial-southern-california-desalination-pilot-projects.html>.

Freeways to Toll Roads? The Metropolitan Authority began on February 23 to allow solo riders to go in the new high-occupancy toll lanes on the 10 Freeway between the 605 and Alameda Avenue in L. A. In order to use these lanes, solo riders will have to obtain a transponder from the MTA and pay a toll. Carpoolers will be able to ride these lanes for free. The emergence of tolls in these HOT lanes could presage a future of toll roads for southern California on all freeways. Most economists would argue that so-called freeways (like many other free goods) will suffer from congestion and slower traffic. Such congestion causes increased travel times and more air pollution. Thus a move to toll roads instead of freeways could decrease travel time and help somewhat with air pollution and green house gases.

To learn more about this topic and to get information on obtaining a transponder, go to <http://www.metro.net/projects/expresslanes/>.

Clean Water Fee Update

The L. A. County Supervisors have been struggling with the issue of storm water and polluted beaches. Storm water acts as a cleanser for upland areas, scouring all manner of pollution from streets and sidewalks and taking it out to the beach. Consequently, polluted beaches cause illness in swimmers and surfers. The *N. Y. Times* notes that L. A. County is “home to 7 of the 10 most polluted beaches in California.” (4/8/13) Recently, L. A. Regional Water Quality Control Board issued new regulations that create incentives for the County and

cities in the County to deal with storm water before it is sent to the storm drain system.

The County Flood Control District sent a mailer to each household in the County announcing the possible fee and asking whether home owners would oppose it. As Supervisor Don Knabe noted in his address to the LWV/LAC Convention, the way in which the District did the mailing raised serious questions of process. First, the District called the charge a fee instead of a tax, which allowed the County to avoid the 2/3s vote requirement for new taxes. Second, the mailing was only sent to property owners and not all citizens. Apartment dwellers would, most likely, bear some of the fee, as apartment owners would pass the costs along to them. In addition, many complained that the mailing did not seem to be an official county mailing but looked more like an advertisement. Hence, many recipients likely sent it to the trash without looking at it.

Knabe also noted that many homeowners, businesses, and institutions have already invested in developments designed to do something about storm water but would still be assessed the new fee, in effect, paying twice. In addition, the existing proposal contained no project-specific information and had no sunset clause. As a result, the Board of Supervisors essentially tabled the measure, directing the Flood Control District to comeback with a reworked proposal for dealing with storm water. Knabe noted that the County and its citizens will have to do something about this problem as beach pollution is very costly from an economic perspective.

The issue of storm water policy raises two interesting questions: One, who is responsible for the pollution?; Two, who will pay to clean it up? The issue of responsibility seems pretty obvious. Since the pollution comes from streets and sidewalks in the County, the citizens and businesses in the County are responsible. There will likely be lawsuits about this, however. If the principle of “polluter pays” prevails, then it seems to follow that residents of the County should pay. As supervisor Knabe pointed out, some way will have to be found to protect schools and those who have already invested in storm water mitigation efforts. In the end, the costs of the cleanup will have to be covered.

Jail Update 2013

By Vi Iungerich

On March 18 the sheriff held a news conference to announce the appointment of Terri Mc Donald to the position of assistant sheriff for the jail system. Her mandate will be to implement the recommendations of the commission's study on jail violence. This should lead to improvements in the handling of inmates in the county jails. At this press conference the sheriff indicated that of the 138 review of force cases, only 3 were found to be problematic.

(However, the commission found biased reporting and entangled oversight to be among the many problems which led to an FBI investigation and ultimately the commission's report and recommendations.)

At this same news conference the sheriff updated information about the jails. Since our study the population in the jails has increased to about 19000 inmates a day. This is due in large part to the transfer for inmates from the prison system to the jails. Currently there are 9 facilities being used in the county jail system. There is an emphasis on educational programs while incarcerated with 57 programs available. Also there are currently about 2500 mentally ill inmates in the jails. A video of this news conference is available for viewing on the sheriff Departments web site.

In the past two years the sheriff's department has reviewed and overhauled the implementation of the educational program now called Education Based Incarceration or EBI. During intake each inmate is asked if they are interested in education while they are incarcerated and if they say yes they are then given a second interview and an educational plan is implemented. For League members interested in these changes a web site www.EBI.lasd.org will lead to a general site and if you click on "the EBI Book" found in the column on the left, a fairly complete booklet will explain the programs currently available. There is an emphasis on life style changes as this seems to result in lower recidivism rates. The Hacienda-La Puente Adult School no longer provides academic programs and the jail contracts with LA Works for pre-high school course work. This organization also takes inmates who are being released and are ready for testing for GED certificates to a testing site when they are released. The jail also uses other schools districts (5 Keys, John Muir, and Centinella) for academic work. These school districts (in San Diego and San Jose) negotiate their services frequently and bids are taken from other school providers. For example, the LA Works contract is up in June. Free programs and research programs are recruited. When funding is needed, the Inmate Welfare Fund is used for programs (especially vocational and behavioral programs). There is an effort to determine which programs are the most effective for helping the inmates.



Healthcare Report by Phyllis O'Connor

The most far-reaching Health Care developments in the past year centered around the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, now almost universally referred to as “Obamacare.” These are just a few of the recent legislative actions:

- California lawmakers are considering expanding the scope of practice for non-physicians in an effort to address a shortage of doctors to treat individuals who will gain health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Sen. Ed Hernandez (D-West Covina) plans to offer legislation that would allow physician assistants and nurse practitioners to establish independent practices. It also would allow pharmacists and optometrists to act as primary care providers and diagnose and manage certain chronic conditions.
- A special session of the California Legislature, called by Governor Jerry Brown, opened on January 28 to pass laws to continue to implement the Affordable Care Act, and get California ready to take advantage of the benefits available starting in January 1, 2014. The session is expected to last for a few months, running concurrently with the Legislature's existing session. Bills in the special session will operate on a faster timeline, and once passed and signed, go into effect in 90 days after the session, rather than waiting until January 2014 for their enactment, as would legislation in the normal session.
- Governor Brown's proposed budget for the coming year includes an additional \$350 million in funding for Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. Brown also seem to suggest that California's 58 counties which, by state law, are required to provide health care to the “medically indigent”, could administer their own programs, or let the state take over the administration and withdraw at least some or all of the funding they now receive. Just how much revenue counties would have to give up will be the topic of negotiations in the coming months, and counties such as Los Angeles that operate their own public hospitals will have much to say.



Mental Health 2013 - Schizophrenia

by Vi Iungerich

In March of 2013 there were several articles in the news about Schizophrenia. Approximately one out of 100 people in the United States is diagnosed in it. Its symptoms are often seen in street people who seem to be talking to invisible others and occasionally their delusions and hallucinations can make them dangerous. While the majority of mentally ill people are harmless, a few mentally ill people (often schizophrenics) are behind some of the more dangerous and unexpected shootings in our society.

The onset of schizophrenia is frequently in the late teens or twenties and often these people have relatives with the same illness. If a person has a first degree relative with schizophrenia, their risk jumps to one in ten of having the illness. While there are drugs to treat this illness, they produce uneven results and often these drugs have severe side effects. Frequently mentally ill people stop using the drugs because they do not believe they have an illness or do not like the side effects. Another common problem is that mentally ill people often use and become addicted to street drugs such as cocaine. Such people are then diagnosed with a dual diagnosis and such folk are common in our jails and prisons.

As far back as the nineties it was noted that an occasional person with schizophrenia, if treated with dialysis, would lose their schizophrenic symptoms. Dialysis is good at removing proteins and waste from the blood that is not removed by the kidneys. As research has progressed a variety of metabolic disorders are being found in schizophrenics.

Most have a genetic component, but not all schizophrenics have the same genetic disorder or metabolic disorder.



In March of this year and in the past few years, several papers have been published with new findings. In Finland in July of 2011, a paper was published that found the protein NRG-1 was not cleaved, apparently due to a genetic defect in Gamma-secretase. A study published in March of this year, traced a variant of the gene GRIN3A which codes for GluN3A, through a continuing metabolic pathway to find that it eventually blocks a neurotransmitter glutamate receptor used in the brain. This blocking is similar to the action of PCP. Other studies, including postmortem studies of people with schizophrenia, have found elevated amounts of GluN3A in their brain tissue.

Other researchers theorized that stress and some brain abnormalities found in infants are also responsible for schizophrenia. Children whose brains show larger lateral ventricles seem to have a higher risk of developing schizophrenia. Alterations of brain activity are also seen in children at risk. In children from ages 9 to 18, circuitry involved in emotion and higher order decision making, was hyperactivated in children with parents and/or other relatives with schizophrenia. It has been hypothesized (Belger – March 2013) that these findings of abnormal brain activity eventually damage certain areas of the brain, resulting in an inability to handle stress normally — a finding that has been noted in people with schizophrenia.

The variety of research and publication indicates that a possible understanding of this mental illness may soon be reached. In March alone, several significant papers were published and there is hope of diagnosing this illness in infants or young children well before there is significant damage to the brain. Along with earlier diagnosis, other active areas of research include searching for interventions that can lead to a cure for this devastating illness.

Affordable Care Act Community Forum

If you're not sure how the upcoming changes to federal healthcare regulations will impact you, you're not alone. The Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) Community Forum is an education and information session to provide details on the changes and how it will affect you and your health.

Four expert panelists will answer questions and provide insight on the new guidelines.

Panelists:

Dr. Lisa Santora, Chief Medical Officer, Beach Cities Health District (Moderator)
Dr. Gerald Kominski, Director, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research
Robin Camrin, VP, Medical Staff Services/Performance Improvement, Torrance Memorial MC
Dr. Romilla Batra, VP & Medical Director, SCAN Health Plan
Dr. Barbara Carnes, Medical Director, Kaiser South Bay Medical Center

Sponsored by:

League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities
Beach Cities Health District
MB Senior Citizens Resources Committee
City of Manhattan Beach Older Adults Program

Free and open to the public

Date: Tuesday, April 23

Time: 7–8:30pm

Location: Joslyn Community Center
1601 Valley Drive, Manhattan Beach

Contact: harriet@beachvoter.org

www.beachvoter.org



PARKING INFO: Some free street and lot parking and metered parking underground accessed through the City Hall parking lot on 15th Street between Valley Dr. and Highland Ave.

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.

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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

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



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