



# 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 Area • Whittier

[www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org)

[LWVLACounty@msn.com](mailto:LWVLACounty@msn.com)

August/September 2013

### Calendar 2013

<b>Wed. Sept 4</b>	County Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	TBA
<b>Sat. Oct 26</b>	County Fall League Day	TBA
<b>Sat., Jan 25</b>	County Winter League Day	TBA
<b>Sat., Mar 29</b>	County League Convention	TBA

### In this issue...

President's Message	page 2
LWV/LACounty Board of Directors	page 2
Natural Resources Report	page 3
Mental Health Report	page 4
Announcements	page 4
Raphe Sonenshein at "Popovers in Pasadena"	page 5, 6, 7
LWVC Legislation & Advocacy	page 7

## From Our President's Desk...

Wow! We had a great Summer League Day in Pasadena. We were concerned two weeks before the event with only 15 registrants. But we ended up with 84 attendees. Evaluation forms showed high ratings for the day. People liked their workshops, thought lunch was tasty – including the traditional popovers, of course - and very much enjoyed our speaker. Thanks to our excellent workshop presenters: Sally Seven, Joanne Leavitt and Barbara Inatsugu, Linda Herman and Pat Kromka, and Fatima Malik and Jack Sullivan. And special thanks to Smart Voter Director, Ernie Ting for coming down from northern California to speak on the SV Next Gen. Of course, thanks to Dr. Raphael Sonenshein for an informative and entertaining presentation. And thanks to all who attended to make the day fulfilling.

Local Leagues are now planning for the coming year. We have local elections coming up. Some Leagues will face several races. There is also the LWVUS Agriculture Study and the LWVC study on Higher Education – a bit farther down the road. Keep checking the national and state websites for information on these studies.

We all will be tracking the way in which the new school-funding scheme – LCFF/Local Control Funding Formula – affects our schools in LA County. Another area of concern is the way in which the federal directive to reduce the number of inmates in state prisons impacts the County jail system. And we will also be looking at the way in which the Affordable Care Act is implemented in California. These are serious and heavy issues for LA County.

I want to invite anyone who is interested in working on the County level to consider taking a position either on the County League Board or off-board. The County Board needs help tracking issues and welcomes new participants. Contact me if you are interested or want more information – see contact information below.

*Nancy*

Nancy Mahr  
[nlmahr@verizon.net](mailto:nlmahr@verizon.net)  
 310-377-0735

### League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County Board of Directors, 2013-2014

**President**

Nancy Mahr

**First Vice President**

Lola Ungar

**Second Vice President**

Margo Reeg

**Secretary**

Betsey Coffman

**Treasurer**

Dorothy Stewart

**Directors**

Raquel Beltran

Linda Herman

Vi Iungerich

Fatima Malik

Phyllis O'Connor

Marie Palmeri

Linda Paquette

Sally Seven

Sandra Trutt

Jack Sullivan

Pat Kromka ( Chair, Nominating Committee)

## Natural Resources

### Jack Sullivan, LWV/LAC

**LWVUS Agriculture Study:** LWVUS has formed an Agriculture Study Committee to look at a range of issues in agriculture in light of the LWVUS positions. The study will focus on:

- 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and
- 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process. (LWVUS)

The study committee hopes local leagues will hold consensus meetings during the period September 2013 to April 1, 2014. To get Leaguers started, the study committee has published some suggested summer readings, which can be found at <http://lwv.org/member-resources/agriculture-update>

Lester Brown's recently published book, ***Full Planet, Empty Plates: the New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity*** (Norton, 2012), is another good source for Leaguers to learn about agricultural issues. Brown identifies three pressures on our food and water resources:

1. population growth;
2. people moving up the food chain (consuming more meat and poultry); and
3. turning grain into ethanol.

Brown also notes that around the world, rates of crop yield per acre have increased in the past but recently have begun to flatten out. He also notes the effects of increased agriculture on the water system as over pumping of aquifers leads to land subsidence or compaction (in some cases by as much as 25 feet). One conclusion that can be drawn from his book is that the world cannot carry on as it has with respect to food production.

**Bay Delta Conservation Plan:** The BDCP has now been issued and the assessment of it has begun. The plan includes the proposed twin tunnels taking water around the Delta for export to the south as well as ecosystem restoration in the Delta. A formal comment period will be held in the fall and there will likely be much discussion, pro and con, of the plan. Leaguers can get information on the plan from the Water Education Foundation's *Western Water* (May/June 2013), "Meeting the Co-equal Goals? The Bay Delta Conservation Plan". The WEF is at <http://www.watereducation.org/> and their blog is at <http://aquaforia.com/>.

**California Carbon Challenge:** Next 10, the folks that created the California Budget Challenge game, have now developed the California Carbon Challenge. The context of the game is AB 32, the legislation which commits California to reduce state-wide green house emissions. The game is structured in a manner similar to the budget game. The user is given a sequence of choices to make to reduce carbon emissions and the program keeps track of both the amount of reduction and the costs of reduction. The summary page presents the results of the user's efforts and includes an indication of who pays for the costs. You can find the game at: <http://www.carbonchallenge.org/>



## Mental Health

### Critique of DSM 5 by Viola Iungerich

The National Institute of Mental Health withdrew its support for DSM 5 in May of 2013. It stated that it would no longer fund research projects that rely exclusively on DSM criteria. Previously the Institute had thrown its weight behind earlier editions of the manual. It cited the “lack of validity” and it further stated that: “Unlike our definitions of ischemic heart disease, lymphoma, or AIDS, the DSM diagnoses are based on a consensus about clusters of clinical symptoms, not any objective laboratory measure.”

This latest critique is symptomatic of the long struggle in producing DSM 5. While emphasizing the biological and genetic component of mental illness—the cultural, environmental and psychological factors are played down. Because a detailed understanding of the brain remains elusive, psychiatry continues to be dependent on outward manifestations of behavior for its taxonomy of mental distress and illness.

Unlike most published diagnostic manuals, DSM 5 was produced in a very secretive way that cut out many of the main thinkers and leaders in the field. When the authors started the work of a new manual, (more than a decade ago) they wanted to go beyond simply describing disorders to include “underlying” genetics and neurobiology. However, there was insufficient evidence for this shift and scandals involving kickbacks from drug companies gave rise to concern about over-diagnosis and overmedication with evidence that many of the top-selling medications worked little or no better than placebos. As a result, the alternative program for devising new diagnosis as listed in the manual is presented as conclusive rather than being speculative. In the long run these diagnoses do not necessarily point to the help needed to those struggling with mental distress.

Other critiques include the problems that there are more diagnoses being offered and the criteria for many have been lowered so that almost everyone can now be diagnosed with a

mental disorder, with a medication as the solution to most troubles. But the underlying changes are often not supported in the scientific literature. All these critiques are troubling as the manual is used heavily by insurance companies for the funding of care and determination of the “proper” treatment.

---

## Announcements

### COUNTY FALL LEAGUE DAY October 26 – Save the Date!

Fall League Day is usually the last Saturday in September, and in the past this has generally been ballot measure training. As this training isn't needed this fall, the County Board has decided to move Fall League day to October 26, the last Saturday in October. We want to be a resource for the Local Leagues, so the program will focus on the Agriculture Position Update, and include several speakers addressing specific topics found in the study scope. Flyers will be sent out in September.

### FOOD BANK – THANK YOU!

Thanks to the many members who donated to the Regional Food Bank at Summer League Day in Pasadena (“Popovers”).

We collected \$684! As our liaison Carole Slavin noted, the Food Bank needs a lot of support this year. We are so pleased to make this contribution.

### USE THE COUNTY VOTER!

Don't forget that information and articles in the County Voter may be reprinted in your Local League Voters.

**RAPHE SONENSHEIN ADDRESSES THE LEAGUE AT POPOVERS, JULY 27, 2013**  
**by Pat Colby, LWVPV**

Professor, author and city governance expert, Raphael “Raphe” Sonenshein, addressed the L.A. County League-sponsored “Popovers” Luncheon on July 27, 2013 at the Women’s City Club in Pasadena. His subject, *L.A. Votes: What It Means for the County, the Region, the State and the Nation* was prefaced by high praise for the LWV. “To many of our voting citizenry, a public issue endorsed by the LWV carries real ‘moral authority’.”

On the subject of the 2013 run-off election in Los Angeles, Sonenshein noted that the 23% voter turn-out led to “end-of-the-world” articles, bemoaning low voter response to an election for mayor, city attorney, controller and positions on the school board and city council. Disappointing as the turn-out was, Sonenshein said it still meant a quarter of a million people voted; the cup, in other words, could be considered one quarter full. Nationally, voter turn-out in the 2012 election for president dropped 30%. Voters do not rally in the second round of an election as they do in the first.

Some say the Republicans in California are an extinct species, but Sonenshein says they also have opportunities. San Fernando Valley Republicans, for example, helped mayoral candidate Eric Garcetti win by a staggering majority against his run-off opponent, Wendy Gruel, who was counting on strong support from her Valley base. During the run-off, Garcetti tied Gruel to the much disliked Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (both its union and the organization itself), implying that the DWP endorsed her candidacy for the favorable benefits it would garner upon her election to mayor. Though Gruel had many other organizations behind her, the DWP “connection” deprived her of critical Valley votes and Republicans played a major role in her defeat. Another advantage for Republicans in California is their distance from the party hard-liners. In this state the party is less interesting than the Republican candidates who can be themselves and advocate for causes in which they believe.

In the current political climate, says Sonenshein, it is more popular to be conservative than a Republican and better to be a Democrat than a liberal.

Sonenshein next examined the concept of term limits which he says were good intentions with odd consequences. For the Los Angeles City Council, term limits were initially a good thing; many council members had been in city hall for too long. For California’s Assembly and Senate, term limits have been a catastrophe; state government is being run by a handful of career bureaucrats en lieu of an ever-changing, inexperienced legislature. Term limits have “Sacramentoized” the City Council as more and more former state legislators seek local elective office. In the past, citizen politicians: a local activist, nurse or teacher, for instance, could run for city council and win. Women were frequently elected to the council (it was almost a “branch” of the LWV). There were lively debates on local issues with equal measures of disagreement and compromise. Today, seven out of fifteen members of the L. A. City Council are former state legislators. The arrival of so many state politicians, combined with the leadership style of the council president—a former Assembly Speaker—is already making council members behave like their counterparts in Sacramento: fall into line with the party leadership and recognize there are rewards and punishment for disobedience.

Money does not necessarily win an election. Candidates for three hotly contested seats on the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Board of Education were supported either by the Coalition for School Reform which raised over \$3.5 million or by the teachers’ union which raised \$4.5 million. Only one of three candidates supported by the Coalition won. Only one candidate in three funded by the teachers’ union won. The board seat in District 6 pitted Antonio Sanchez who ran a million dollar campaign against Monica Ratliff who employed a low budget approach. Ratliff won by four points.

*Popovers review continued from page 5*

Elections at the regional, state or national reflect a similar pattern of mixed results for candidates with the most money.

Dr. Sonenshein agreed to answer audience questions during a Q & A session.

**Yes, Mayor Garcetti will be facing an early test over a proposed DWP plan.** The DWP union leader, Brian D'Arcy, who ran a tough campaign against Garcetti in the May election, is trying to line up City Council support for a new salary agreement for DWP workers. The proposed labor agreement also raises the possibility of a struggle between Garcetti and Council President Herb Wesson, who has been pushing for a quick deal with the DWP union, Local 18 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The ultimate terms of the contract will affect future rates that L.A. businesses and nearly four million residents pay for water and power. Garcetti's spokesman stated that "the mayor was elected to bring real reform to the DWP and that includes pensions, healthcare and salaries."

**No, term limits will not affect the current Board of Supervisors** and most of them would not run for a local office as it would be considered a step-down. In my opinion, Los Angeles County is well run but poorly governed. The Supervisors are unaccountable to the voters and almost invisible to the two million inhabitants in each of their districts. What is needed is a County-wide Executive, analogous to a city manager who has responsibility for the total operation of all county services including criminal justice, social and health services, welfare, waste treatment, taxes and other programs specific to the needs of the county.

**Yes, Governor Jerry Brown did "step-down" by becoming the mayor of Oakland and later Attorney General.** Now that he is governor again, he's thirty times more successful than the first Governor Jerry Brown and he loves what he's doing, including the role of the "cranky old man" who breaks all the rules.

**Great idea! Let's have a single day in California where every local issue up and down the state is placed in the ballot.** It would be a logistical nightmare to organize such an election but what an event. We could call it Local Democracy Day or Statehood Day.

**A quick explanation:** Shelby County (Alabama) v. Holder is a U.S. Supreme Court case regarding the constitutionality of two provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: Section 5 which requires certain states to obtain federal pre clearance before implementing any changes to their voting laws; and Section 4(b) which contains the coverage formula (maintenance of a prohibited "test or device" as a condition of voter registration, for example) that determines which jurisdictions are subjected to pre clearance based on their histories of discrimination in voting. In 2013, the Court ruled 5 to 4 that Section 4(b) is unconstitutional because the coverage formula is based on 40 year old data and no longer responsive to current needs. Therefore, the coverage formula can no longer be used to subject jurisdictions to Section 5 pre clearance.

**The Palmdale Voters Rights Judgment:** Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mark V. Mooney ruled that Palmdale, California's method of electing City Council members by a citywide vote rather than through individual districts is keeping Black and Hispanic candidates out of office and therefore is in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act has been used to sue several cities since it was signed into California law in 2002. One was Modesto which switched to district voting as a result.

**I might point out that North Carolina became the first state to pass a more restrictive voting law following the Supreme Court decision that struck down a core provision of the 1965 Voter Rights Act.** The state voted 33-14 to require a government-issued photo I.D. (rather than use of the current system that also allows for use of student I.D. cards issued by the public universities and community colleges),

*Popovers review continued from page 6*

to limit the time frame for early voting, to prohibit same day registration and to keep high school students from registering before their eighteenth birthday. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recently announced that the Justice Department will petition a federal court in Texas to force that state to be subject to a “pre clearance regime similar to the one required by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.” The federal government presented evidence of intentional racial discrimination in a redistricting case in Texas last year.

**The focus on voting laws comes as the USA is undergoing a demographic transformation** affecting its politics with states such as North Carolina and Texas moving to competitive on the presidential level as a result of the changing make-up of their residents. A historic decline in the number of U.S. whites and the fast growth of Asians and Latinos are blurring traditional black-white color lines, testing the limits of civil rights laws and reshaping political alliances as “whiteness” begins to lose its numerical dominance.



**LWVC LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY**

**Your League's Choice of Issues for Education and Advocacy**

At the very exciting convention in May, we adopted four [Issues for Education and Advocacy](#). The LWVC has no expectation that local Leagues will participate in all four of these issues. We know that you have local issues that are important, and there is a [national study on agriculture](#) coming up. We trust that you will all set your own priorities among local, regional, state and national issues based on the interests in your League and the local community.

There are some priorities with the list of the four issues. Two issues ([health care](#) and [water](#)) are acknowledged to be at a lower priority than the first two—[money in politics](#) and [education](#). We hope that all local Leagues will take part in some way in at least one of the top two issues.

**Action Alert, Calls to Action, Action Requests – What’s the Difference?**

Over the past weeks, some local Leagues have received action messages from the LWVC. These have been targeted messages, focusing on key legislators on issues of importance to us: the money in politics bills we are cosponsoring, and protecting the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

If you received one of these messages, we hope that you contacted your legislator in the name of the League, and that you passed the message on to your members so that they can contact the legislator as individual constituents.

What are the different kinds of messages the LWVC sends?

**Action Alert:** An alert asking members and other individuals to take action.

**Call to Action:** An alert asking local Leagues to contact their legislators in the name of the League.

*Note: These first two – action alert and call to action – are sometimes used interchangeably for alerts asking members and/or local Leagues to take action.*

**Action Request:** A message from an individual Program Director, asking for action on issues of importance **within the program area**.

These generally represent issues that, while not an overall priority issue for the League, are a high priority within the program area. The League’s voice could help persuade particular legislators. These messages are couched as requests, but we do hope that local Leagues will find the resources to respond on some level.

- Helen Hutchison, LWVC 2nd Vice President for Program and Advocacy [hhutchison@lwvc.org](mailto:hhutchison@lwvc.org)

## LWV/LA County VOTER

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.

### SUBSCRIBE to the VOTER

Send your email address to the Voter editor to be notified of the latest VOTER posted on our website at: [www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org) and to be included on the email distribution list.

Send to: [mebarnes@aol.com](mailto:mebarnes@aol.com)

### Join Us

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. **Find a local League below :**

Beach Cities - [beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org](http://beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org)

Claremont Area- [claremont.ca.lwvnet.org](http://claremont.ca.lwvnet.org)

East San Gabriel Valley- [esgv.ca.lwvnet.org](http://esgv.ca.lwvnet.org)

Glendale-Burbank - [gb.ca.lwvnet.org](http://gb.ca.lwvnet.org)

Long Beach Area - [lba.ca.lwvnet.org](http://lba.ca.lwvnet.org)

Los Angeles - [lwvlosangeles.org](http://lwvlosangeles.org)

Palos Verdes Peninsula - [palosverdes.com/lwv](http://palosverdes.com/lwv)

Pasadena Area - [lwv-pa.org](http://lwv-pa.org)

Santa Monica - [lwvsantamonica.org](http://lwvsantamonica.org)

Torrance Area - [torrance.ca.lwvnet.org](http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org)

Whittier - [whittier.ca.lwvnet.org](http://whittier.ca.lwvnet.org)

**August/September 2013**

### Internet Election Resources Smart

**Voter** [www.smartvoter.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.easyvoter.org)

Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English

**Secretary of State** [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

Official text of ballot measures

**CA Legislative Analyst** [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov) Analysis of all ballot measures

**CA Voter Foundation** [www.calvoter.org](http://www.calvoter.org)

Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures

**CA Budget Project** [www.cbp.org](http://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](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org)



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