



# LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

# VOTER

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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

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June / July 2014

### Calendar 2014

Wed., July 2	Board Meeting 9:30 -1:30	LWVLA Office
Sat., July 19	Summer League Day - Popovers "Money in Politics"	The Women's City Club, Pasadena
Wed., Sept 3	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Location TBA
Sat., Sept 27	Fall League Day Ballot Measure Training, Advocacy Workshop	Hollenbeck Park
Wed., Oct 8	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Location TBA
Wed., Nov 5	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Location TBA
Wed., Dec 3	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Board Holiday Luncheon
Sat., Jan 31	Winter League Day 10:30 - 2:00	Location TBA
Sat., Mar 28	County Convention	Location TBA

### ***Inside this issue...***

President's Message	— — — — —	—Page 2
Mental Health	— — — — —	Page 3
Save the Date - Popovers in Pasadena	— — — — —	—Page 4

**From Our President’s Desk...**

We have all had a busy spring as the statewide primary approached. Several candidate forums were held for various offices. The County Voter Guide was distributed to the public. We answered many questions. And finally, many worked at the polls on Election Day. Good work all around!

Our voter turnout was disappointing - with 13.59% in LA County. With so much campaign literature, people surely knew that there was an election. It seems clear that many voters do not think that it matters whether they vote or not. I hope we can help change that thinking for the November election.

Summer County League Day is on Saturday, July 19. This varies from the County League’s usual meeting day of the last Saturday of the month – this is the third Saturday. We made this change to secure a lower cost for the event. We all love the City Club and its popovers, and the lower cost will help us keep the per person cost reasonable.

“Popovers” will be an interesting day. Our speaker is Jessica Levinson. She is a professor at Loyola Law School and specializes in election law and governance issues, including campaign finance. She will speak on money in politics. Ethics is another of her specialties. Workshops include using Twitter as part of your action program, ideas for member growth and retention, and a first look at the Vote by Mail study that was voted at County Convention. We’ll also have a drop-in session for presidents and treasurers, where you can bring your questions and concerns. Watch for the program flyer/reservation form that will be coming via email soon.

Fall League Day is on the books – Saturday, September 27. It will be ballot measure training and an advocacy workshop at Hollenbeck. Put the date on your calendars.

Summer is a great time to plan and organize for the coming year. Have a productive summer – and include relaxation and restoration!

*Nancy*

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**League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County Board of Directors, 2014 -2016**

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## Mental Health

by Vi Iungerich, Mental Health Portfolio

Mental health is in the news again with the shootings of Memorial Day Weekend. While the cause is guns in the hands of the mentally unstable—the underlying story continues to be inadequate services for the mentally ill as well as the lack of sensible gun laws.

Voters of California voted for Proposition 63 in 2004 with monies specifically set aside to service the mentally ill. Yet today this funding is still at risk because it taxes millionaires 1% for programs for the mentally ill --and there are fewer Millionaires today in California. The amount of money from this tax is approximately \$1.3 Billion a year.

And like many states, the state also wants to divert portions of this money to Medi-Cal and other state programs in the red. Since the passage of this proposition, California has tried to set up several programs that will reach the mentally ill who have no other resources such as those who are homeless or in jails. LA County receives about \$277 million for its community health programs. These programs have been successful as shown by a 63% reduction in homelessness, a 90% reduction in stays in state hospitals and a 37% reduction in incarceration of the mentally ill since these programs were implemented. Yet all is not well.

On 5-14 **USA Today** started to publish a series on mental health in this country. The first of this series addressed some of the costs associated with inadequate mental health policies. This article gave several examples of how removing hospital beds and money from the mental health system costs both taxpayers and the mentally ill. One example concerned a Vermont young mother who was severely depressed and suicidal. After the hurricanes of last year, Vermont closed its only psychiatric hospital. No beds were available for her with her last suicidal attempt in Vermont so she was eventually sent to a hospital in Massachusetts with a taxi bill of over \$3000—picked up mainly by Medi-Care. The cost of building and

staffing jails far outweighs the cost of providing mental health care that can stabilize someone. Still politicians have more public support for “Law and Order” than they do for mental health care. And so we continue to pay for these shortsighted policies.

In this county, the state has reopened Norwalk Hospital for the state mentally ill. But problems continue that caused these facilities to be closed in the first place. Inadequate staffing first caused the death and injury of both staff and patients. In 2005, there were a sufficient number of incidents that the federal government contemplated an investigation and in time the hospital was placed under the oversight of the courts. Eventually in 2012, a US District Court released the state mental hospitals from federal oversight after a 6 year reform effort with one exception. The exception that continued oversight claimed the hospitals were violating patient’s civil rights due to heavily drugging them and failing to provide appropriate treatment.

Another example of slow reform concerned a patient in May of 2009 who was supposed to be under constant watch but was found in the morning lying on the floor with a broken neck. It then took more than five hours before she was transferred to a trauma center where after becoming paralyzed from this accident she eventually died from related respiratory complications. Not until February of this year was the doctor in charge of the woman with the broken neck finally disciplined, losing his license to practice due to incompetence and gross negligence. Yet another fairly recent staffing incident concerned a state police officer who was arrested last May for molesting a 14 year old girl at Norwalk. So do we still continue to have marginal care and oversight for a very vulnerable population? And so do we still have to fight for every dollar to serve these people even though adequate care is not only cheaper but also more humane?

# **SAVE THE DATE!**

## **Summer League Day “Popovers in Pasadena”**

**Saturday, July 19, 2014**

**Our Speaker: Jessica Levinson, Esq.  
Professor, Loyola Law School**

**“Money in Politics”**

**WATCH FOR RESERVATION FLYER**



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 - [lwvpalosverdes.org](http://lwvpalosverdes.org)

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

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

Torrance Area - [lwvtorrancearea.org](http://lwvtorrancearea.org)

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

### 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)



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