

January
2005

LWV/LAC VOTER

President's Message

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.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

SOCIAL POLICY

The Children's Planning Council is setting up action regarding its ScoreCard 2004 recommendations on "Family Economic Security." Subcommittees to "promote using Earned Income Tax Credit returns" are being formed in December. Among them are Financial Literacy/Affordable Banking, Asset Building and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance. SPA members are being invited to serve as subcommittee members. Information: Marco Martinez, EITC Coordinator, CPC, 213/974-7404, mamartinez@bos.co.la.ca.us.

The delay in implementing the next stage of the 1999 law revising nurse/patient ratios has been taking on strong political overtones. As reported last month, the Schwarzenegger administration was seeking a delay so that the "state's numbers for ratios [could be] backed by conclusive scientific evidence...." A recent television ad by the California Healthcare Association, "which represents hospitals and health systems" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/7/04), is framing the administration's decision as support for the status quo and in the best interests of patients. Apparently there is no reference to the original rationale for studies to establish best practices criteria. Following appearance of

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the ad, Schwarzenegger appeared at the California Governor's Conference on Women and Families.

Members of the California Nurses Association protested the staffing delay and were singled out by the governor with his comments: "Pay no attention to those voices over there. They are the special interests, and you know what I mean. The special interests don't like me in Sacramento because I am always kicking their butts" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/8/04). The U.S. nursing shortage is projected to be roughly 275,000 nurses by 2010. "Immigration officials beginning Jan. 1 will block a shortcut that allowed thousands of foreign nurses, predominantly from the Philippines, to get fast-track U.S. work permits.... What has been a 60-day wait could now take up to three years or more" (*Whittier Daily News*, 12/10/04). The League should continue to watch events and spin surrounding this delay.

Sally Rivera

LWV/LAC Social Policy Chair

Update on SB 921-Health Care

The bill will be reintroduced in February with a new title- not the Health Care for All Californians Act. The bill will first be heard in Senate Health without the tax structure. When the bill goes to Revenue and Tax the tax structure will be in the bill.

The results of the Lewin Report, the fiscal analysis of the viability of SB 921, will be released at a press conference in Sacramento on Jan 19. The report will show that there is \$20 billion saved over 10 years . The results were much more spectacular than expected based upon the assumptions.

We not only expect to have an aggressive lobbying campaign but need to increase the involvement of more groups and broaden the contacts. This has to be more than a letter writing campaign. We have to reach out to various constituencies that can become spokespersons on this important piece of legislation. This requires that we bring together

groups who can actually be committed to this effort. This reform will also save governments money according to the Lewin report.

Sheila Hoff

LWV/LAC Health Director

VOTERS SERVICE

Statistics, statistics, statistics! That's what the quarterly Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC) covered. Sponsored by the County of Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC), the meeting was attended by numerous League of Women Voter representatives, as well as advocates for minority groups and the disabled. County Clerk Connie McCormack was on hand with lots of interesting statistics. The meeting reviewed the November 2, 2004 election.

In Los Angeles County, 3,085,582 ballots were cast at 4,602 precincts across the city, an extremely high voter turnout of 79.10%. The RR/CC telephone hotline took 64,508 calls on Election Day. The website was also in great demand, and made it possible for more people to get information than just by phone alone. On Election Day the RR/CC website took 5,999,152 hits from 191,872 visitors. 81,021 visitors looked up their poll location, 40,444 looked up a directional map and 29,629 looked up their sample ballot.

McCormack gave a recap of Touchscreen early voting. Voter turnout for Touchscreen Early Voting for the November 2004 Presidential election was 65,175. A majority of the Touchscreen sites showed a record increase in voter turnout. There were some lessons learned with Touchscreen Early Voting, however. Many of the Early Voting sites have maxed out on the number of Touchscreen units, staffing and the number of voters that can be accommodated. As more voters opt to vote early rather than at the polls, there is a need to reconsider

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site locations for future Touchscreen Early Voting. One issue is the adequacy of parking at Touchscreen locations. An advocate for the disabled affirmed that her disabled clients were very happy with the use of the Touchscreens, for it offered them the ability to vote without assistance.

Despite the overall positive report of the how things went on Election Day, some members of the meeting aired complaints about the voting process on Election Day, including a lack of bilingual voter materials, lack of bilingual poll workers and poorly trained poll workers at some locations.

The next topic was Voter File Clean Up. Los Angeles County does not purge its voter rolls. Voters who haven't voted in two presidential election cycles become inactive and no longer receive sample ballots. However, the inactive people are listed in the same rolls as active voters, so if they come to the polls on Election Day, the poll worker can find their names without looking on a separate list.

The meeting then covered the Student and College Poll worker Program. 133 High Schools and 25 colleges participated. 3200 High School Poll workers served in the 2004 Presidential election, up from 1600 in the Primary Election. 1440 College students served in November 2004, up from 308 in the primary.

A representative from the "Girls Today Women Tomorrow (GTWT)" program gave an account of its Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Poll worker Grant Program. Together with The Los Angeles Conservation Corps, they implemented a nonpartisan college poll worker outreach and recruitment initiative under the Help America Vote College Program. GTWT recruited 152 college poll workers in Los Angeles County. Over 75% of the recruits were bilingual Spanish speaking individuals—in short supply throughout the county. Over 95% of these individuals took part in training and worked at the polls on November 2.

Ballots Cast: 3,085,582 (79.1%)
Absentee Votes: 701, 106

Provisional Votes: 204, 578

Inmate Votes: 16

Monica Marquez

LWV Glendale/Burbank Voter Service

NATURAL RESOURCES

LAND USE/SMART GROWTH IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The Land Use Committee met in early December. The committee members worked on a number of questions for interviews related to Land Use and Smart Growth which were later presented to the County Board for approval. We also planned to arrange for interviews within the next month with County planning officials, MTA officials, and members of the Regional Water Board. Once the interviews are arranged, we will ask members of local Leagues to assist us in the interview process. We welcome interested Leaguers to the next meeting of the Land Use Committee on **Saturday, January 8th at 10 AM at the Music Center fountain near the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion** or call for information at 310-375-7410.

We would also like to inform all local Leaguers that you will learn more about the County Land Use study by attending the County League Day event on **January 29th**. The theme will be **Creating Smart Growth in Los Angeles County** at the **Almanson Court Restaurant**, 700 S. Almanson St., Alhambra (detailed flyer attached). Guest speakers will be **Lynn Harris**, Manager of the SCAG COMPASS Project, on "The Future of the SCAG Region" and **Mark Herwick**, Senior Planner, LA County Regional Planning, on "How the County is Preparing for Future Growth."

Lola Ungar

LWV/LAC Natural Resources



League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County

Creating Smart Growth in Los Angeles County



Saturday, January 29, 2005

**Almanson Court Restaurant
700 S. Almanson St., Alhambra**

**Lynn Harris, Manager of the SCAG COMPASS Project
The Future of the SCAG Region**

(Southern California Association of Governments – Includes the Counties of Los Angeles,
Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura).

**Mark Herwick, Senior Planner, LA County Regional Planning
How The County Is Preparing For Future Growth**

Registration: 9:30 am, Speakers: 10:00 am -12:00 noon
Hands-on Planning Focus Groups 1:00-2:00pm

Morning coffee and lunch is \$25 if paid by January 19th, incl. vegetarian options;
\$30 for registrations received after January 19th.

(From the 10 Freeway, exit north on Garfield. Turn right on Valley Blvd. and left on Almanson St. Enter parking lot on your right. From Pasadena area, take Huntington to Garfield, turn south, cross RR tracks and turn left on to Park, which deadends into the Almanson parking lot.)

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RSVP and mail checks payable to **LWV/LAC** to:

Gwen Cochran, 427 East Walnut Ave. Burbank, 91501

Name(s) _____

League _____ No. attending _____ Vegetarian _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund,
The California Public Utilities Commission, The California Energy Commission, The
Commonwealth Club of California and Town Hall Los Angeles

present

Keeping the Lights On

*An informed public is the most important element of a functional democracy.
Become informed on this issue that affects our daily lives.*

- What are the challenges to how energy policy is made—post restructuring?
- What are the needs and the options in terms of energy resources and transmission?
- Are there changes in the way that electric utility business is done and regulated that would benefit the people of California?
- What is the role of citizens in state energy decision making?

Invited Speakers Include . . .

Debra Bowen, State Senator
Martha Escutia, State Senator
John Geesman, CEC Commissioner
Jim Boyd, CEC Commissioner
Michael Peevey, CPUC President

Sunne Wright McPeak, Secretary, Business,
Transportation and Housing Agency
Joe Desmond, Deputy Secretary for Energy,
Resources Agency
Susan Kennedy, CPUC Commissioner

January 21, 2005

Registration Deadline: January 18, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ronald Reagan State Building, Auditorium
200 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA

January 28, 2005

Registration Deadline: January 25, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

CPUC Headquarters, Auditorium
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA (*Across from City Hall*)

Admission: \$25 Meeting and box lunch ■ \$15 Meeting only, bring your own lunch
 \$15 Payment at Door, no lunch available, bring your own lunch

Accessibility: Both venues are wheelchair accessible and easily accessible by public transit.

The complete agenda is available on the League of Women Voters Web site: www.lwvc.org
For more information, contact Jane Turnbull at 650-559-1766 or by e-mail to jaturnbu@ix.netcom.com

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Please indicate which forum you will attend: _____ Los Angeles _____ San Francisco

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ An e-mail confirmation of your reservation will be sent to your e-mail address.

If a League member, please indicate your local League: _____

Make your check payable to the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund (LWVCEF)
Mail your check and registration form to Jane Bahr, PO Box 4112, Los Altos, CA 94024

January 2005

**League of Women Voters
of Los Angeles County**

Margo Reeg, President
Chris Carson, Editor
carsonlww@earthlink.net

We're on the Web!!
<http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

Calendar

Happy Holidays!!

January 8—Land Use Com-
mittee Meeting, Music Center

January 11—LWV/LAC
Board Meeting

January 21—LWVC Energy
Symposium (see flyer)

January 29—League Day,
Land Use (see flyer)

February 2—WPC Meeting

February 8—LWV/LAC
Board Meeting

February 9—LWV/LAC So-
cial Policy Network Meeting

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For information, contact carsonlww@earthlink.net