

March
2004

LWV/LAC InterLeague Newsletter

President's Message

Hello all!

Time is running out. We are less than a month away from our County Convention where you will be electing a new President. This has been a wonderful experience, as with most League experiences, a time of growth and learning.

I won't thank people here, I have done that in my report for the Convention Kit and will do it again at Convention, but the people involved have made this a great two years. Not just the wonderful people on my board, but the people from the local Leagues I have been able to work with either in person or on line. I will go back to what has almost been my mantra for the past two years—we are our own best resources. There has not been a problem brought to me by any local League that someone in League has not been able to answer. The depth of knowledge and experience in the board and membership is outstanding.

One of the unexpected joys of the past two years has been going to my mailbox and finding your Voters. This is sometimes the only way we have of knowing the exciting things that are happening at the local level. I have tried to recognize these activities in my messages here. I will miss these mailings and, if you have them electronically or can afford to keep me on your mailing list, please do so. I really do enjoy getting these and reading them.

I seem to have a way of starting a new job before I finish the last one. As most of you know, I am chairing the Education Update Study for the state. Because of the time that is going to take I will not be on the county board next year. But that does not mean that I will not be involved, just not have to make every meeting. I am not going away, just wearing a different hat for the next two years or so.

I will start now with one of those new hats. I have agreed to chair the next nominating committee. I am putting out an early call. Are you interested or do you know anyone who should be contacted to serve on the ILO board or in an off board position. I want to help the new board fill the consultants' posi-

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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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tions. The consultants who have expertise in a narrow area make the life of a board member much easier. The job is to feed them information on what is happening in the county on an issue you care about and are very well informed in.

This is a time of transitions. I will write a short note next month after the Convention. Leave the longer space to your new president. I never planned for this role, never expected it, and am surprised by how much I have enjoyed it. It is the people I have worked with that have made it so enjoyable.

Joanne Leavitt
(ac997@lafn.org)

VOTER SERVICE

A countywide forum for Superior Court Judicial candidates was conducted on February 15 by the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County in the West Covina City Council Chambers. Of the 36 candidates vying for 9 contested offices, 20 participated in the forum moderated by Andrew Bliss of the East San Gabriel Valley LWV.

Because of the large number of participants, the candidates were divided into two groups of 10 according to the judicial offices being sought. Each panel of 10 began by giving a two-minute presentation on his/her reasons for seeking judicial office and personal qualities that make him/her equipped to be a judge. At the end of the hour each candidate made a closing statement.

During the question and answer period, Mr. Bliss directed questions submitted by the audience to the candidates which addressed topics including LA County Bar Association ratings, the ability to treat all racially and financially diverse defendants fairly, the ability to adjudicate cases fairly having been a defender or a prosecutor previously, and campaign finance filing practices.

Many of the candidates, 10 of the 20 in attendance, come from careers as criminal prosecutors. Two of

the candidates, Zeke Zeidler and Donna Groman have experience as court referee and court commissioner, while John C. Gutierrez is an Administrative Law Judge. Gus Gomez and Bob Henry work for the State Attorney General, while Miguel Angel Dager is employed as a Los Angeles City Deputy Attorney. One, Larry Layton, runs his own law school. Daniel Dik is a Civil Litigation Attorney, as is Stella Owens-Murrell, and Kevin Burke is a former prosecutor and current police sergeant.

In answering the question about the County Bar Assn. ratings, candidates expressed belief that, although the process involved interviewing the lawyers themselves and talking to many of their colleagues and court opponents, the final ratings often reflected some political aspects and might depend on whom one knew. Both those who were rated well qualified and not qualified recognized the inherent politics in the process. The not qualified lawyers suggested that they had not been told what caused them to receive the negative rating.

One candidate reported that the County charges each judicial candidate \$65,000 to place a statement in the sample ballot, which meant that to send a statement to every voter in the county required one to raise a significant amount of money. Consequently most candidates did not purchase a statement. All who participated did bring campaign literature to distribute to the listeners at the forum. League staff that helped make the forum run smoothly included Sally Seven, Claremont, and Sally Rivera, Whittier, question sorters; David Bassett, ESGV and Alma Martinez, Whittier, time keepers; Olivia James and Carole Restovich, Whittier, ushers; Beverly Walker, Whittier, and Jean Perkins, ESGV, cards and pencils. Margo Reeg, County Voters Service chair and LaRue Brewer, ESGV, made the arrangements. The audience of about 80 included League members from ESGV, Pasadena Area, Whittier, Claremont and Beach Cities.

West Covina Community Cable taped the forum which was broadcast live in West Covina. Tapes were played in Claremont, Covina, and Whittier. Charter Cable shared the original tape with its af-

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filiales in the County. Adelphia Cable and Comcast Cable were asked to share copies of the tape with their affiliates.

Margo Reeg, LWVLAC Voter Service Chair

TRANSPORTATION

The Metropolitan Transit Authority will begin a special tow truck program on the 710 freeway. "Super tows", capable of towing large trucks will be stationed along the 710 freeway to be able to respond immediately to truck break downs. Since most of the congestion is caused by truck break-downs rather than accidents, having super tows on the scene within minutes rather than dispatching them from one central location, will improve the flow of traffic and stop massive gridlock before it gets started. This is a simple idea which won't cost millions of dollars but it will pay big dividends for transportation in Los Angeles County.

Chris Carson, LWVLAC Transportation Director

HEALTH CARE

SB 921 (Kuehl) Health Care for All Californians Act will be heard by the Assembly Health Committee this spring. This bill guarantees quality comprehensive health coverage for all residents of California through a single payer system. It establishes a single fund and limits the administrative costs to no more than 5%. Last year the health coverage in California saw a 28% administrative cost equal to \$45 billion out of \$163 billion spent on total health care in California according to Harvard Medical School researchers. Their report indicated that with a single-payer system California would have saved \$34 billion which would have been "enough to cover every uninsured person in the state and improve treatment for others".

We need to secure the votes from the following Assembly Health Committee members. If you and your League members are in these districts please write or call them and ask them to vote Yes on SB

921 (Kuehl). This is the only reform that covers everyone, provides a quality comprehensive system with stability and equality for all and does not take money from other programs as it will have its own funding stream.

Please contact the following legislators and ask as many of your members to call or write:

The Honorable Dario Frommer, AD 43, 818 240 6330, Fax 916 319 2143; The Honorable Mark Ridley Thomas, AD 48 213 745 6656, Fax 916 319 2148; The Honorable Gloria Negrete McLeod, AD61 909 621 2783, Fax 916 319 2161; The Honorable George Nakano AD53 310 782 1553, Fax 916 319 2153. They want to know how their constituents feel about this subject.

Sheila Hoff, LWVLAC Health Policy Director

The LWVC board has approved the Health Care Issue for Emphasis Plan which encompasses an education strategy including

- educational forums on the current crisis in health care and possible solutions
- information resources prepared for local Leagues and for selected interest groups presenting facts and issues related to health care coverage
- a publication on health care issues and solutions.

Our goal is to inform California residents of the current factors contributing to the state's health care crisis, and provide a comparison of three methods of increasing access to health care: incremental, play or pay and single payer financing. Understanding reform methods should lead to informed decision making on health care legislation.

Members of the Health Care Issue for Emphasis Committee are Barbara Storey (LWV Santa Monica), Shirley Rich (LWV Los Altos/Mountain View Area), and Joan Ward (LWV Diablo Valley). Linda Craig will be a consultant to the committee. We would like broader geographical representation on the committee. Please send suggested names to Barbara Storey (bs_lwv003@hotmail.com).

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PASADENA AREA

PRESENTS

A Community Forum On Health Care Delivery

WITH

State Senator SHEILA KUEHL

Author of SB921 providing single-payer health care coverage—
passed by the Senate last year and heading to the Assembly

State Assemblymember JUDY CHU

Member of the Assembly Health Committee

AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE AND HEALTH CARE REPRESENTATIVES

Moderator: **KITTY FELDE**

Commentator/Host of "Talk of the City" on KPCC 89.3 FM

Saturday, March 20, 2004

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Atherton Baptist Home, Merriam Chapel

214 South Atlantic Blvd.

(1.2 miles south of Huntington Drive)

ALHAMBRA

Ample parking

Requested donation: \$3

For reservations (priority seating):

Call us at **626-798-0965** between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., or leave a message.

E-mail us at office@lwvpasadenaarea.org

(Visit our website at www.lwvpasadenaarea.org)

The United States leads the world in health care spending at about \$5,000 per person per year on average... [but] ranks 37th in population-based health outcome measurements...

"...20-30 percent of the health care dollar is spent on administration (excluding profit)... [Under SB921] California could reduce administrative costs to 1.8 percent of health care spending..." [restoring] \$14 billion dollars annually to direct health care services."
— **Sen. Sheila Kuehl**



League of Women Voters
Los Angeles County

42nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

Saturday, March 27, 2004

Location: Tamayo's Restaurant

5300 E. Olympic Blvd. Commerce

(I-5/710 exit Olympic Ave. east, 60 exit Atlantic Blvd. east)

Registration: 9:30am, Convention: 10:00am-2:30pm



Lunch Speaker: Richard McKee,
California First Amendment Coalition

Cost: \$25, includes morning coffee, buffet lunch (including vegetarian options) and materials, for registrations received by March 15th; \$30 for registrations received March 16th-23rd. No reservations will be accepted after March 23rd.

RSVP, including checks payable to LWV/LAC, to:

Gwen Cochran, 427 East Walnut Ave. Burbank, 91501

Name(s) _____

League _____ **Delegate** ___ **Visitor** ___

Phone _____ **Email** _____



March 2004

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

Joanne Leavitt, President
Chris Carson, Editor
carsonlww@earthlink.net

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

Calendar

March 9—LWVLAC Board Meeting

March 20—Health Care Forum (See flyer)

March 27—LWVLAC Convention (See flyer)

April 13—LWVLAC Board Meeting

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For information, contact carsonlww@earthlink.net