



# 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 • Whittier

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### LWV / LACounty Board of Directors 2010

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**Nominations**  
Amy Bishop Dunbar

### Calendar 2010

Wed, April 7.....County Board Meeting, 9:30-1:30

Sat, April 24.....Ballot Training, 9:30-12:00

May 15-16.....LWVC Leadership Council

Tues/Wed May 25-26.....Board Retreat and Board Meeting

Wed, June 2.....County Board Meeting, 9:30-1:30

Fri-Tue, June 11-15.....National Convention

Wed, July 7.....County Board Meeting, 9:30-1:30

Sat, July 31.....Popovers, 9:30-2:00

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## **From the President's Desk...**

Thanks to all for the great turnout for the 2010 County Convention at the Carson Center on March 27. Over 60 League members attended and all eleven local Leagues were represented. We elected a new County Board and set County League program for the coming two years.

County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas was a highlight of the morning. The Supervisor, who was elected in 2008, represents nearly 2.3 million people who live in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisorial District. His district runs from Carson through Lynwood and Inglewood and up to Culver City. He commented on the County's budget and the difficult choices the Board must make in providing County services with reduced funding. He is strong supporter of community health care and worked to achieve an agreement with the University of California to provide medical services at the new Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital, scheduled to open in 2012. He also worked with the MTA to open a light rail line from Crenshaw to LAX, moving up the opening to 2016 from 2029.

The Supervisor responded to many questions from League members. To a question regarding the federal health care reform, he noted that we must celebrate the achievement of this level of reform after decades of work toward this goal. However, we should continue to strive for further reform as we move forward.

I want to thank the delegates at Convention for electing me as your County president for another term. I appreciate the confidence reflected in this action, and look forward to your support as we address the issues that we meet in the coming two years.

*Nancy*

## AB 32 and All That

**by John Sullivan, Natural Resources Director LWV/LAC**

**AB 32:** The Global Warming Solutions act (AB) passed the state legislature in 2006. The goal of the legislation is to strengthen the state's clean energy economy and reduce greenhouse emissions that lead to global warming. (For more information on AB 32 go to <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/cc.htm>.) The Planning and Conservation League (*California Today*, March 2010) has issued an alert that AB 32 is under attack. The attacks are based on arguments that AB 32 will cost the state jobs. Responses to these attacks on AB 32 have argued that they are based on flawed benefit/cost analyses. James L. Sweeney and Matthew E. Kahn provide an extended argument about this issue (*LA Times*, March 24, 2010) and conclude that the "decisions facing our state are too important to be swayed by relying on such a deeply flawed study." There may be a ballot measure for the November 2010 election that would result in the suspension of AB 32 if passed. LWV of California will likely provide pro and con information on such an initiative and also take a position on it.

**The Delta:** Water withdrawn from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is transported south for agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley and municipal and industrial uses in southern California. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel on the Delta has issued its report and, as one observer noted, there is something for everybody in it. (*LA Times*, March 20, 2010, p. AA3) Those who feel that water withdrawals from the Delta have harmed the Delta ecosystem and its aquatic life will point to the report's conclusion that restrictions on pumping were justified. Those who oppose the restrictions and feel that agriculture has been

hurt by them will point to the fact that the NAS report also indicates there are many other problems in the Delta that could have caused declines in the smelt population. In short, the conflict over Delta exports is not yet over (nor likely to be in the near term) and it behooves us all to continue our efforts at water conservation.

**Saving Energy in So Cal:** In a press release on March 23, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that "Los Angeles, Calif., has the greatest number of energy efficient buildings that merited the EPA's Energy Star in 2009." Washington, D.C. and San Francisco were second and third on the EPA's list. The EPA noted that energy efficiency saves building owners money and fights climate change.

There are 296 Southern California energy efficient buildings on the EPA list which includes the Arena Corporate Center in Anaheim, Maguire Properties Lantana West in Santa Monica, Legacy Oceangate Tower in Long Beach, the office building located at 501 W. Broadway in San Diego, and the Trident Center in Los Angeles. The complete list is available at <http://www.energystar.gov/buildinglist>.

Gina McCarthy, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, noted that "These cities see the importance of taking action on climate change. Communities from Los Angeles to Louisville are reducing greenhouse gases and cutting energy bills with buildings that have earned EPA's Energy Star." There is additional information at the EPA's southern California environment page: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/socal/>.

## Men's Central Jail Tour

By Vi Iungerich and Betsey Coffman

On March 16, a group of eight women toured the Men's Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles, the largest jail in the world. This three-story building currently holds about 6,000 inmates, but in past times has held as many as 10,000 inmates. The jail was built in two parts, an older half built in the 1963 and the newer half built in the 1976. It is connected to the Twin Towers by an overhead passage.

Deputies Rosa Castro and Michael Scott conducted our tour. They were very open and informative during the tour. They showed us a display of jail-made inmate weapons and gave us some general information about the jail we toured the jail area.

The tour started out in the line-up room. This auditorium-like room has a small stage-like area with a wall of windows. The windows act as a mirror when the lights in the seating part of the room are turned off. Those in the line-up cannot see the audience. A microphone allows the inmates in the lineup to hear instructions but not general conversation.

The jail is considered an open jail as various inmates are allowed to walk around unescorted following general rules. Inmates are sorted by colored clothing. The general population wears medium blue. Trustees are dressed in pale green. At-risk inmates (alternative lifestyle and celebrities) are dressed in pale blue and high security inmates are in orange. Inmates jailed for child molestation are segregated for their protection but are given general population clothing.

There are no windows in this jail, and all air is filtered and recirculated. Long hallways are decorated with murals and paintings that have been done over time by inmates. Because the population vastly outnumbers the deputies, (there are approximately 2 deputies for about 120 inmates) there are a variety of rules and policies to keep control.

- When out of the dormitories or cells, the inmates must follow lines painted on the floor. Various colored lined lines lead to certain sections, for example the clinic, visiting room, school room etc
- Inmates walking about must also keep their hands in their pockets except when they are trustees and carrying food or laundry to sections of the jail.
- Deputies try to place a mix of ethnicities together in cells. For example in a four man cell they will try to place one black, one Hispanic, one white and one other ethnicity. This breaks up groups and forces groups to get along.

The deputies also have an arsenal of tools to keep control. They carry no guns, but have a large canister of pepper spray. They also have a large gun that shoots a large rubber plug, and a type of grenade that makes a loud noise and sprays rubber pellets for use in a mass riot situation. They also carry intercom phones and can lock off areas.

The first section we toured was a block of two tiered cells that was empty and being renovated. Many parts of Men's Central Jail are being renovated to accommodate inmates from North County Detention Facilities that are being closed due to budget decreases. The cells were enclosed by metal bars, and tray-sized open spaces in the doors allowed meals to be easily delivered. A long cat-walk outside the cells lets a deputy walk along the cells and see into them. At the beginning of the row of cells were two larger cells – one that contained showers, the other that held metal tables and stools fixed to the floor.

Deputies must view each cell at least once an hour. In each smaller cell there are four lower metal shelves and two upper shelves that are used as bunks when thin mattresses are placed on them. In the past, as many as eight inmates resided in these cells, six in the bunks and two on the floor.

*Jail Tour Continued from Page 4*

Due to lawsuits these cells can now house a maximum of four men. Also in each cell are a metal toilet and washbowl, and a payphone. Inmates can use the phones if they have money in their accounts. Money can be put into accounts for them by their friends or family.

Extras such as soap and shampoo are provided by the Inmate Fund if an inmate cannot afford to supply his own. Inmates are also provided cleaning supplies to keep their cells clean. A shower is provided at least every other day, and in this jail they are currently given daily. Daily showers are helping to control staph infections. Daily meals are balanced for nutrition and consist of a cold breakfast and lunch and a hot dinner daily. They also have three hours a week of outdoor time or exercise. In some areas, inmates do not have to go outside unless they wish to. Once out, they must stay there for the 3 hours.

Next, we saw a dormitory of men that were segregated because they all had an alternative lifestyle. A large room holding double bunks for about 120 men was partly filled with about 70 or 80 men. Along one side was a partly partitioned area holding a row of toilets, followed by a row of showers. There was no seating space other than the bunks. We observed the dorm from a raised, enclosed deputy booth from which most of this area could be seen.

On the wall of the deputy booth was a schedule of classes provided by a Gay West Hollywood group (SMART). They give classes in HIV prevention, academics, and other information that is of interest to this group. This is not part of the general education offered. Although sexual contact is against the law--this group also provides a condom to each inmate once a week and they pick up the used materials in a bin. The deputy noted that by law, these inmates must be provided with HIV medications, if needed, and also hormones if they are using them for gender changes. The deputies noted that there are men who run out of money for their medications, and

then commit petty crimes in order to go to jail and receive them free.

We also saw a dormitory that was filled with inmates in a school module. They can earn a GED or basic education. We looked at the classroom area and saw two rooms that were well supplied with classroom material and 20 computer stations, etc.

We were taken to the roof where the outdoor exercise area is located. Here there is a small covered area roofed with tables and benches and a water fountain. The day was sunny and some inmates were lying in the sun on their shirts. A few others were walking around the edge and a few were playing with a basketball where a couple of hoops had been attached to pillars. Along one edge of the roof was a row of individual cells for high security inmates. In each of these cells, which were open to the sky, was a pay phone and a U-shaped metal bar for exercise bolted to the floor. There was also a glassed-in booth set in the central area for the deputies to oversee the area.

After leaving the roof we passed a long line of trustees going to the laundry to pick up supplies. Inmates get two sets of clothing including underwear and socks and a set of bedding once a week. Trustees sort the laundry into an individual pack of bedding and clothing for distribution to each inmate.

We were going to visit a block of the older jail cells, but when we arrived the area was "locked down" for a strip search. On leaving the inside of the jail, the clinic area, the attorney room and library were pointed out to us, but we did not enter these areas. All in all, we thought it was a very interesting morning.

## HOUSE FINALLY PASSES COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM "Monumental, Historic and Transforming," Says League

**Washington, D.C.** - Statement from Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States:

"Today's votes by the U.S. House of Representatives mark an historic milestone in American political history. The path that began with Social Security and continued with Medicare is reaching fruition with this health care legislation. Comprehensive health care reform will begin to undo decades of neglect and inaction that has left millions of Americans uninsured and at risk. "This legislation is a monumental step in the fight for social justice."

"Too many citizens lack adequate health insurance coverage and rising costs threaten everyone. Passage of comprehensive health care legislation greatly expands coverage to include millions more Americans; protects the coverage that currently delivers care to most; reduces costs over the long term; and accomplishes these goals at a reasonable cost."

"It would be difficult to overstate the importance of today's actions, and we commend our elected representatives for standing up for Americans and having the courage to do what needs to be done to confront the health care crisis in our country. The League congratulates the House leadership on a closely-fought victory."

"We can expect transformational reform from these bills. Access to health care will be extended to all Americans. Mechanisms to control rising costs will be put in place. And the marketplace will be expanded and safeguards put in place to protect consumers."

"Truly, this legislation is monumental, historic and transforming."

"Today we took the critical step in dealing with the current health care crisis. Tomorrow, many Americans will wake up to a new week and a new future that looks a great deal more promising"

### School Finance 2009-10

It was a rough ride for California schools in 2009. Now that the dust has settled, the California school system faces a net funding cut that averages about \$470 per pupil compared with 2007-08, and more cuts are possible.

California's difficult economic situation has also increased pressure on the state's community college system by simultaneously increasing demand for the colleges' services and reducing their funding.

Use the EdSource on-line resources to get vital information on school finance and issues: [www.edsource.org](http://www.edsource.org), and [www.ed-data.org](http://www.ed-data.org).

Read the report *Budget Basics for Schools and Communities* for tools to help understand and explain our finance system, the budget cycle, and more.

# Homeless in the South Bay

A panel discussion of issues facing the homeless  
and the community



Monday, April 26, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Redondo Beach Main Library  
303 North Pacific Coast Hwy

(Park in lower level garage and take elevator to 2nd floor)

Co – sponsored by:

League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities

South Bay Coalition for the Homeless

Redondo Beach Public Library

Panel:

South Bay Coalition for the Homeless – Lauren Nakano

Housing – Harbor Interfaith Services, Shari Weaver

Meal and Pantry Programs – Shared Bread, Mary Dufresne & Michelle May

Mental Health Services – Exodus Recovery, Dr. Robert Dutile

Health Care – Harbor UCLA Medical Center, Dr. Susan Partovi

Jobs and Employment – South Bay Workforce Investment Board, Jan Vogel

For more information, please call the Library (310) 318-0675 or email [harriet@beachvoter.org](mailto:harriet@beachvoter.org)



[www.beachvoter.org](http://www.beachvoter.org)

*Light refreshments provided*



[www.redondo.org/library](http://www.redondo.org/library)

# League of Women Voters of Santa Monica Educational Forum

## THE POLITICS OF PLASTICS

A panel discussion with special guests from public agencies, government, and business involved with managing plastic waste in the environment.

**Jonathan Bishop:** Chief Deputy Director State Water Resources Control Board

**Richard Bloom:** Santa Monica City Council Member, Commissioner for California Coastal Commission, Chair Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

**Sonia Diaz:** Legislative Analyst for Heal the Bay

**Lisa Foster:** Owner/CEO, 1 Bag At A Time

**Dean Kubani:** Senior Environmental Analyst, City of Santa Monica Office of Sustainability and the Environment

**Coby Skye:** Civil Engineer, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

**10 a.m. to 1 p.m.,  
Saturday, April 3, 2010  
Santa Monica Main Library Community Room  
601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90403  
[www.smpl.org](http://www.smpl.org)**

**Wheelchair accessible. Underground parking available for a nominal fee. Light refreshments will be served.  
Bring your own bagged lunch.**

**THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO SANTA MONICA RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS AND LWV MEMBERS. RSVP'S APPRECIATED BUT NOT REQUIRED CALL OR CONTACT THE LEAGUE FOR MORE INFO  
(310) 394-4661 OR [LEAGUE@LWVSANTAMONICA.ORG](mailto:LEAGUE@LWVSANTAMONICA.ORG)**

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](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/LACounty President**  
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