



LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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Editor: Mary Ellen Barnes Website:<http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org> Email:LWVLACounty@msn.com February 2010

LWV / LACounty Board of Directors 2010

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Amy Bishop Dunbar

Calendar 2010

Wed, Mar 3.....County Board Meeting, 9:30-1:30

Sat, Mar 27.....Convention, 9:00-2:00

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

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

May 15-16.....State 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...

Winter League Day on January 30 was an exciting and informative event. Over 100 attended to learn about "Gangs in LA" and how law enforcement and intervention-oriented CBOs work together to address the gang challenge. The combination of the morning panel of experts and the remarks by LAPD Chief Beck in the afternoon gave the audience a broad picture of the varied approaches that are being used cooperatively. Many thanks to Jean Thomson (LWVLA) for organizing this special program. LWVLA and LWV/LACounty jointly sponsored the program. The program was videotaped and a DVD will be available for each League. In addition, the program can be viewed online at <http://blip.tv/file/3158273> (Beck) and 3164936 (panel).

It's not too late to apply to the new Citizens Redistricting Commission. February 12 is the deadline for initial application. The commission needs intelligent, informed women – you.

Go to: www.wedrawthelines.gov .

The state budget is once again in jeopardy – or is that “still” in jeopardy? Education and social services will be impacted. The County budget and services will feel the crunch. We don't yet know the extent of service reductions – keep informed. (See the EdSource article in this Voter.)

I recently attended a presentation by California Forward (CF), an organization working to identify issues and practices that have negative effects on the state, and develop actions that can be taken to address these problems. CF welcomes citizen input. Visit the CF Web site at www.caforward.org .

We're moving into an even more complex and problem-filled year than the last. The work of the League is needed. Stay involved; be a part of the solution.

Nancy

COUNTY CONVENTION 2010

The 2010 LWV/LACounty Convention will be held on **Saturday, March 27, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Location to be announced. Look for the flyer in the March VOTER!

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas is the keynote speaker at Convention.

Other business of the Convention includes:

- election of officers
- determination of program for the coming 2 year period
- by-laws change
- adoption of County League budget for the coming year
- reports from County League Board officers and directors

A Convention kit will be mailed to each League president at the end of February.

Rain and More Rain by John Sullivan Natural Resources, LWV/LAC

January brought a fair amount of rain (but thankfully no destructive mud slides) but Southern California is not free from water worries. The storms did deposit much snow in the Sierra Mountains and contributed some water to groundwater replenishment. As a result of the rains, the Interior Department announced it would release some additional water for farming in the San Joaquin Valley. However, the experts tell us that the reservoirs are still low. February may bring additional storms but it is still imperative that we all be sensitive to our water consumption and conserve as much as possible. In addition to conserving water, here are some environmental issues to watch in the coming weeks.

The Delta (Yet Again): The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta plays a crucial role in California's water delivery system. Last year, a federal judge limited pumping from the Delta to protect the Delta smelt, a fish on the Endangered Species list. This decision caused quite a stir, particularly in farming areas of the San Joaquin Valley. During the week of January 24th, a National Academy of Sciences panel held hearings on the Delta and the state of the smelt, salmon and other fish species. Some argued that the panel had been "hijacked" by those who benefit from water exportation from the Delta and that Delta interests (commercial and recreational fishermen and environmental justice proponents) were not asked to testify before the panel. Others argued that it was important that the science on the Delta

be clarified so that sensible policy could be developed. What ever the panel comes up with regarding pumping from the Delta, it is highly unlikely that it will end the war over the Delta.

Tranquillon Ridge: In his new budget, Governor Schwarzenegger proposes to lease oil drilling rights on Tranquillon Ridge off the coast of Santa Barbara and use the revenue to keep the state parks open. LWVC has supported this proposed drilling in the past (along with local environmental groups). Opponents feel that the governor is holding the state parks "hostage" to his drilling proposal. They also point out that, unlike other states, California does not have a severance tax on oil and gas extraction. Such a tax would produce additional revenue for the state. In any event, this proposed lease of drilling rights is likely to be debated in the coming months.

The Future: These two issues indicate that the debate over how we continue to grow will be with us for some time. It is imperative that society find ways of developing growth patterns that are sustainable over the long run and do not force us to make choices between ecosystems and economic productivity and population growth. The League of Women Voters of California has a sustainable communities action policy and a growth management action policy. Local leagues should make use of these policy tools as questions of environment and growth arise in their communities.

Redistricting – The League in Action by Sally Seven

In 1988, LWVC adopted a position supporting a state redistricting process that would promote fair, open, and effective redistricting. Twenty years later, in November 2008, Proposition 11 was approved by the voters.

Now, as I write this, the Citizens Redistricting Commission Selection Process is underway. The number of applications received the first day (December 15, 2009) was reassuring, allaying fears that it would not be possible to get a large enough pool of applicants for the process to work appropriately.

The application period will end on February 12, 2010, expanded applications will be collected from qualified applicants by April 2, and the 120 “most qualified” will be selected by July 19. After almost two months of interviews, the pool will be reduced to 60 by the Applicant Review Panel.

The legislature will have a month and a half, from October 1 to November 15, to exercise up to 24 “strikes”. From the 36 remaining applicants, the State Auditor will randomly select 8 commissioners (no later than November 20, 2010). From the 28 left in the final pool, the randomly selected 8 will pick 6 more to make up the final body of 14.

It is gratifying to see efforts of public-spirited citizens produce real change in the civic process.

Most of the work of the commission will take place in 2011. There is a web site [WeDrawTheLines.ca.gov] where progress can be monitored. Even those not on the commission can play a role by evaluating the product and submitting comments next year on the proposed new line

News from EdSource

As school districts around California begin work on their 2010-11 budgets, they are facing a financial situation likely to be even more difficult than this year's. Much of the one-time money that the state and federal government provided in response to the recent economic crisis will have run out. And most analyses of the governor's proposed budget and the state's financial situation say that schools will have to make do with even less next year.

The EdSource website (www.edsource.org) can help you understand and this extremely complex situation, from the basics of how California's school finance system works to detailed analyses of the governor's budget proposal and ongoing news and policy updates. Two expert firms, Strategic Education Services and School Services of California, have generously shared their analyses of how the governor's proposed budget would affect schools. You can read them free on the EdSource website:

[Governor's Proposals for the 2010-11 State Budget and K-12 Education](#)
from School Services of California

[Governor's Budget Proposal for 2010-11](#)
from Strategic Education Services

Don't miss the budget update at the EdSource Forum!

California at a Crossroads: Crisis and Opportunity

California's Legislative Analyst, Mac Taylor, will lead off our Annual Forum on March 19th in Santa Clara. Get the latest on the fiscal crisis, including a state budget update and projections for 2010-11. As always, an audience Q&A will follow his presentation.

Register online and get full forum details. www.edsource.org.

Go Directly to Jail: Long Beach Jail Study Meeting by Betsey Coffman

The January Long Beach Area LWV meeting provided an overview of the incarceration system. Sherell McFarlane, Long Beach Deputy City Prosecutor, made a presentation that took us from the first law enforcement involvement, through the arrest and booking, presentation to prosecutor, arraignment, pretrial process, motions, trial, and sentencing. She noted that in Long Beach the Prosecutor's office handles adult infractions and misdemeanors only, with children's crimes and all felonies referred to the LA County District Attorney for prosecution. If the arrest is made by Long Beach police, the City Prosecutor's office decides whether the alleged crime is an infraction, misdemeanor or felony

Given the overcrowding in jails and the time it takes some cases to get to trial, Ms. McFarlane said that she prefers to plea bargain for local community service, rather than jail time, which may mean that the perpetrator could be immediately released because of time served. The Long Beach Jail almost exclusively houses short-time prisoners, usually those awaiting arraignment; if the defendant is remanded to jail following arraignment, either because bail was not granted or was unaffordable, he or she is taken to the Los Angeles County Jail.

Following the presentation, we heard from an informal panel consisting of Ann Ryder, League member and former Orange County public defender; Betsey Coffman (LWV Claremont) and Viola Iungerich (LWV/PVP), co-chairs of the LA County Jail Study; and James Kaddes, Head Chaplain of the Bell Gardens Police Department and Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel in Signal Hill.

Ms. Ryder complemented Ms. McFarlane's presentation and noted that at the first police encounter, a person has a right to ask "am I detained?" and if not detained, may walk away after providing their name. Her advice: "Don't get chatty with the officer."

She explained that jails are operated by cities or counties for certain minor crimes within those jurisdictions, whereas prisons are operated by the state or federal government and usually involve those convicted of felonies or certain serious misdemeanors.

She also discussed probation, a sentencing option in lieu of or in addition to incarceration in a city or county jail. (This is not the same as parole, which is usually a conditional release following incarceration in a state prison.) Probation can be either "Supervised" or "Summary": probation for felonies and certain misdemeanors is "supervised probation" overseen by a probation officer, but "summary" probation does not involve a probation officer. The latter, usually for a period of three years, is the most common type of probation in misdemeanor cases.

Mr. Kaddes spoke of Bell Gardens, which has high concentrations of parolees, gang members and undocumented immigrants. When the city brought in more grocery stores, schools and other basic community services, the crime rate went down.

To conclude the meeting, Ms. Coffman and Ms. Iungerich discussed their visit to Los Angeles County Jail (as detailed in the June 2009 LWV/LAC VOTER).

Time did not permit scheduled reports from local Jail Study Committee members, but they will be made at a later meeting. The committee is chaired by Lois Ledger, and includes Judith Bergquist, Cleola Brown, Estelle Byrnes, Cheryl Epstein and Lucille Zmudzinski as well as Ann Ryder.

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

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

Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multilingual voting materials, Locations for Touchscreen early voting

Easy Voter Guide www.easyvoter.org

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

Secretary of State www.ss.ca.gov

Official text of ballot measures

CA Legislative Analyst www.lao.ca.gov

Analysis of all ballot measures

CA Voter Foundation www.calvoter.org

Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures

CA Budget Project 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



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