



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

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

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2010-2011**

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Nominations

Arlene Block

Calendar 2010

- Fri-Tue, June 11-15.....National Convention
- Wed, July 7.....County Board Meeting, 9:30 - 1:30
Location TBA
- Sat, July 31.....Popovers in Pasadena, 9:30-2:00
Pasadena Women's City Club
- Wed. Aug. 4.....County Board Meeting - Location TBA
- Wed. Sept 15.....County Board Meeting - Location TBA
- Sat, Sept 25Pro/Con Ballot Measure Training
Hollenbeck Palms
- Sat, Jan 29, 2011.....Winter League Day - Rio Hondo Country

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From the President's Desk...

Over the past two months, the County League has been busy. We hosted ballot measure training at Hollenbeck Palms. I attended LWVC's Leadership Council in Sacramento – you can read about Council in the article written by Janelle Freeman of Beach Cities League. The joint-sponsored judicial forum was held at the Southwest Law School (see separate article). The County League Board had its annual Retreat at the Mary & Joseph Retreat Center in Palos Verdes. And planning is underway for the Summer County League Day, "Popovers in Pasadena" (see flyer).

The annual Board Retreat is an opportunity for the board members to review the work of the past year and have informal discussions on directions for the County League in the coming year. Following are some of the topics we discussed:

- Directions to the Board from Convention 2010
- Council 2010
- State and National PMP increases
- County Jail Study
- County League Days 2010-2011
- Participation in the UN regional organization – SCRCO
- SmartVoter
- LWVUS Convention 2010
- "Popovers" planning

In addition, the directors reported on trends and activities in their areas of responsibility.

"Popovers in Pasadena" will be another great day. Judge Michael Nash of the Juvenile Court is our keynote. We need to keep pace with what is happening to children who are at risk in the County. This is especially so in this time of reductions to support services for children and families. There is a workshop for everyone's interest and an excellent lunch. The Jail Study Committee will be distributing materials for local Leagues to use as they organize their participation in the jail study.

Please get reservations in as early as possible. This is a good practice whether for "Popovers" or any League event. Reservations that come in after the deadline create difficulties in working with the venue – especially if food is involved. Using the reservation forms and paying in advance makes it much easier for the registrar/treasurer. If, at the last minute, you find that you are not able to come, try to find a replacement who will use your reservation. We can't always resell an unused spot, and we do have to pay for the meal.

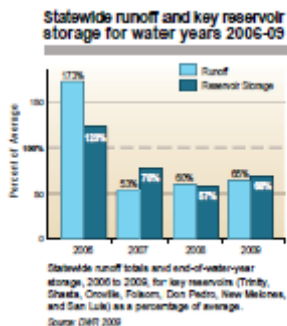
Enjoy a quiet summer after "Popovers," and be ready to launch into the November election whirlwind.

Nancy

Check out the Water Plan, Do the Budget

by John Sullivan, Natural Resources Director LWV/LAC

The Water Plan: The graphic below is from the Highlights Section of the Department of Water Resource's (DWR) 2009 Update to the California Water Plan. As you can see, it nicely illustrates the effects of the drought in California in terms of water run-off and reservoir storage. For the years 2007 to 2009, both run-off and storage were below the long-term average. The graph makes quite clear why water has been such a salient policy issue the past few years and why it likely will be on the policy agenda for the foreseeable future.



This graphic, along with much more information from the 2005 and 2009 Updates to the California Water Plan can be found at <http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/>. It should be noted that Wendy Phillips of LWV serves on the Advisory Committee for the Water Plan. The 2005 Update has a Highlights Section and five volumes which present a strategic plan for water, an extensive set of water management strategies, regional reports, a reference guide, and a technical guide.

So far, DWR has published the Highlights Section and volumes 1 and 2 of the 2009 update. The remaining volumes will appear soon. Just the Highlights Section alone has a great deal of important information about where California's water comes from and how it gets consumed. As the debate over the water bond on the November ballot heats up, the Water Plan site will be much visited.

Do the Budget: Two items will bring the State budget to the fore in the near future: The need for the legislature to pass a budget before the end of the current session; the massive (\$11 billion) water bond on the November ballot. There are two ways to get informed about budgetary issues:

1. Play the Next 10 budget game at <http://www.next10.org/>. Here you will find much information about the State budget and the kinds of decisions that face legislators and you will be able to play the game yourself and explore the implications of your decisions. For example, you can explore the fiscal effects of imposing a carbon tax in the state.

2. Go to the California Budget Project site (at <http://www.cbj.org/>) and take advantage of the wealth of material there. For instance, you can peruse their new paper "Who Pays Taxes?" to learn about the sources of the State's revenues. Both of these sites will allow citizens to gain information which will increase their understanding of the budget debates as they develop.

League Urges Senate to Pass Climate and Energy Legislation

President Mary G. Wilson sent a [letter to the Senate](#) urging them to pass comprehensive legislation on energy and the environment. Opponents of this important legislation have introduced language that attacks the Clean Air Act and would block EPA from taking action against climate change. If it passes, this will put public health at risk and jeopardize long-overdue action to cut emissions from the biggest polluters. [Take action now](#) to tell your Senators to protect the Clean Air Act and to vote against Senator Murkowski's resolution of disapproval (S.J. Res 26) or any similar legislation that blocks EPA action, including S. 3072 introduced by Senator Jay Rockefeller (D WV). The Murkowski resolution is scheduled for a vote on June 10.

MEET THE JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

Margo Reeg, 2nd Vice President LWV/LAC

People expect and trust state and federal courts to be impartial, but attempts to politicize the courts are increasing, according to Justice Judith McConnell, Presiding Judge of the 4th Appellate District, who addressed the public at Meet Your Judicial Candidates Reception at Southwestern Law School on May 20.

Most states have restricted judges and judicial candidates from stating their views on public issues that might come before them. However, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White* that the Minnesota law violated the candidates' 1st Amendment right to free speech.

Today judicial candidates are peppered with questionnaires from various interest groups probing opinions on many controversial topics with the intent to use the responses in print or online to influence voters.

Candidates used to refuse to answer by relying on the canons of judicial ethics, but today, due to the *White* case, they can't use that reason. However, McConnell feels it is very risky for judicial candidates to answer questionnaires, so she suggested they may still refuse to answer based on personal ethics.

Justice McConnell was appalled to learn from one of the 18 candidates that it would have cost \$98,000 to place a ballot statement in the LA County sample ballot. None of the judicial candidates chose to place a statement in the sample ballot. Some candidates claimed that the cost to run in the primary and November elections in Los Angeles County would come close to \$250,000 due to the size of the county.

McConnell stated that a candidate may jeopardize his impression of impartiality by having to accept campaign funds from political or corporate donors.

During the Q and A with Val Zavala of KCET, the focus was on recommendations from the report from the Commission on Judicial Performance released in December, 2008. Justice McConnell commented that civics education for both students and voters is one of the key recommendations. She averred that part of a judge's duty is to do outreach to the public.

Speaking about judicial campaigns McConnell stated that judges have to avoid making statements that would indicate their positions on issues, but attorneys running for judge can express their positions. However, if they become a judge they may be expected to recuse themselves from cases involving those issues.

Of the 21 candidates for the six judicial offices, 18 brought campaign materials and chatted with the attendees representing the public, judicial campaign teams, representatives from law schools, public policy schools, and the League. Frances Talbott-White demonstrated the SmartVoter site live using the judicial candidates' pages. In addition, the Registrar Recorder's office demonstrated the current Inka Vote Plus system and the audio booth which some of the attendees had never seen.

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County and southwestern Law School intend to do more education on Judicial offices in the fall.

LWV/LAC YEARBOOK 2010-2011

Please send your new roster information to Lois Ledger for the new Yearbook 2010-2011. We need portfolio assignments held by League officers, directors, and consultants.

Mail to: Lois Ledger, 1739 Appleton St. #7, Long Beach, Ca. 90802 or email to lledger@verizon.net.

Include name, address, email, and phone for League Presidents and Official Contacts, and all Officers and Directors and their portfolios.

Please call Lois at 562 432-5822 if you have any questions.

Jail Study Committee Visits Inmate Reception Center

On May 11, 2010 the County League Jail Study committee visited the Inmate Reception Center (IRC), a place where about 139,000 male prisoners enter into and depart from the L.A. County Jail System annually. On average, everyday 2,900 inmates scheduled for court appearances are brought from jail housing to board buses to and from court. Also, inmates being re-assigned from one jail to another in the L.A. Jail System go through the transfer process at the IRC.

Our guide, Deputy Art Gutierrez, accompanied us and pointed out the various steps required to process each inmate. From the parking area, where Sheriff's vehicles arrive, the handcuffed prisoners are escorted to large rooms, referred to as "tanks". There was a room near the entrance for testing for alcohol and illegal substances, and several tanks without furniture lined the hall. Large fortified-glass windows on the hall side of the tanks allowed for supervision of inmates. A finger-printing and photograph area was nearby.

As we progressed we saw many more large rooms, which now had metal benches attached to the floors, and a partially walled-in toilet in the back. We were told that prisoners did not spend much time in the first group of tanks or holding cells, and did most of their waiting to be processed in the rooms with benches. Another room contained a long row of showers where the incarcerated men took showers before donning "County Jail blues" – all clothing worn in jail is provided by the Jail System. The men's personal clothing is packaged in blue bags, sealed and labeled, and stored in the property room. Other items brought with them (e. g., money, watches, jewelry, papers) are put in containers, stored, and returned when they are released or transferred.

Next we came to many, fortified-glass windows lining the hallway, with telephone handsets attached to the walls beside them. Here is where the inmates stand to be interviewed by jail personnel behind the windows, using the phone connection. A numerical security classification level is assigned to each individual based on current charges, inmate's responses, criminal and jail disciplinary history, escape risk, and other pertinent factors. Some of this information is obtained by computer search.

Inmates are asked about their health status, and if they have a condition which indicates a need for medical supervision they are diverted to a Jail Medical Services unit that is near the interview window area. This unit also contains a Jail Mental Health Services office, for evaluation of mentally ill prisoners. Because inmates sometimes must wait many hours for health screening, a more comfortable supplemental waiting area is available in the adjoining Twin Towers building.

At some point during the intake process, all inmates are issued color-coded wrist bands which indicate that they are in the general population or require "special handling". The special groups that are separately housed include the mentally ill, homosexual and transgender prisoners, and high security inmates, the latter designated by red wristbands. Inmates who are developmentally delayed, blind or deaf, or who have medical impairments are also identified by wristband color. After intake processing is completed, prisoners wait to be escorted to their housing assignments – these are determined by Centralized Housing Unit (CHU) personnel, using the computerized Jail Inmate Management System.

On the way to the area where inmates are released, we passed another group of holding cells or tanks where a number of men were waiting to make preparations for leaving custody.

Our last stop was at some windowed offices which are used in the discharge process. Inmates who are being released are able to go to one window to retrieve their personal property, and to another window to receive information and benefits, if they are eligible, from the County Department of Social Services. Veterans go to yet another window to arrange for any services they are due from the U.S. Veterans Administration. Those that are being assisted by Jail Transition Unit case managers are met here for help with their release. However, no departing inmates were at the windows when we were there, late on a Thursday morning.

From the discharge area, our LWV visiting group was escorted down a hallway which led to the release door – and then we were out in the sunshine and free.

- Betsey Coffman and Vi Iungerich

LWVC Leadership Council 2010

By Janelle Freeman, LWV Beach Cities

The California Leadership Council 2010 took place May 15 & 16 in Sacramento with the theme:

The Next 90. This year's Council had a 22% higher attendance than the Council two years ago.; 62 of 67 California Leagues were represented.

Along with the reports from the board and staff, the main order of business was the 2010-2011 budget. The main changes in the budget are on the income side. There is a \$1 increase in PMP. Local Leagues will now be charged a 3% administrative charge on liability insurance and LWVCEF held by the state league. Also, there is a predicted sizeable increase over the last two years in contributions. This number was justified by improvement in the economy, a full-time person fundraiser, and that the 2007-2008 year had that level of contributions. A much touted point was that local leagues can now use Education Funds for up to 25% of the annual PMP to the state. After a late night budget Q&A attended by a dozen delegates, the budget passed without further floor discussion.

Another big topic at Council was the overhaul of the state league's on-line presence, including the introduction of CAvotes.org, a site dedicated to voter education. Voter education can be found on both CAvotes.org and ca.lwv.org, but advocacy will only be on ca.lwc.org. Both sites will have on-line fundraising, because people are more generous when they donate on-line.

Quality is being emphasized for the public websites. Anyone wishing to contribute must attend one of the free "Writing for the Web" webinar to be held 5/26 & 6/4 at 10 a.m. Registration for the webinars is easy to find on CAvotes.org by going to events and clicking on the webinar entry on the calendar. The webinar content will be stored on the website for later viewing.

While the public sites will be controlled to preserve quality, it is hoped the new members-only site will be a place for free-wheeling collaboration. Also, the state League would like members to register their email addresses on the LWVC website and sign-up for the LWV CA news. If you register your email address, you can select the no email option.

Your email address will not be given to other organizations.

The only contentious issue at the Council did not get voiced until well into the second day. A question was asked and then some pointed advice to the board was given on the Easy Voter Guide (EVG) "fiasco." There was general concern that errors in EVG, created in part by a decision to go to press before a final candidate list was made available, will undermine League credibility. Although the request by the Secretary of State to have its office removed as a listed sponsor from the EVG cover has been associated with the errors, the request for removal predated the printing. The listing of the Secretary of State on the cover was itself another error.

There was lots of good information on LWV CA's activities in the other reports. An area of emphasis in the President's report, given by our own Janet Hirohama, was the need to make sure redistricting activities are adequately funded, despite the state budget woes, and the need to fight the well-funded threat to reverse Prop 11. More help is needed for the Redistricting Observer Corp. There will be a webinar to train Observer Corp and Media Watch on June 17th at 7 p.m. Go to the CAvotes.org website to register. The Redistricting meetings will be streamed live on www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

The banquet speaker, Zaida Arguedas, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Global Democracy Programs at LWVUS, gave a moving talk about her casting a vote for the first woman President of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla, in January. The Sunday lunch panel gave some interesting, and generally pessimistic perspectives on the future of the California government reform movement.

Overall the Council was very educational, thought provoking, and inspiring of further involvement. The networking with other representatives was just another highlight.

The next California Convention will be held in Ventura 5/13-15/2011.



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2010 ANNUAL SUMMER LEAGUE DAY POPOVERS IN PASADENA

WOMEN'S CITY CLUB 160 NORTH OAKLAND, PASADENA ENTRANCE in rear off N. Madison Avenue 1-1/2 blocks north of Colorado Blvd.

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 2010 9:30 AM TO 2 PM LUNCHEON



Speaker JUDGE MICHAEL NASH Presiding Judge Juvenile Court

WORKSHOPS Redistricting Observer Corps & Media Watch Presidents & Treasurers 21st Century Communications County Jail Study

X. -----

Please send form and check payable to LWV/LAC Mail to LWV/LAC Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut Ave., Burbank 91501

League Name _____

Attendee Name(s) _____

Deadline is July 16, 2010

Reservations # _____ @ \$25.00 Total enclosed \$ _____

If postmarked after July 16th and if available

Reservations # _____ @ \$30.00 Total enclosed \$ _____

Chicken Luncheon # _____ Vegetarian Luncheon # _____ W/O NUTS or other allergens # _____ (name food)

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR A MORNING WORKSHOP

Redistricting # _____ Pres. & Treas. # _____ 21st Cent. # _____ County Jails # _____

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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LWV/LACounty Treasurer,
427 E. Walnut Avenue, Burbank, CA 91501.

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Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

League _____

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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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