



LWV/LA County

An Interleague Organization

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Interleague Organization — Antelope Valley • 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 Area • Whittier

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April/May 2015

Calendar 2015

Fri. - Sun., June 19-21	LWVUS Council	Washington D.C.
Wed., July 1	County Board Meeting	LWV Pasadena Area Office
Sat., July 18	Summer League Day	Pasadena City Club

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From the President's Desk...

At the County League annual convention on March 28, 2015, we elected County League Board officers and directors and passed a budget for 2015-16. We were pleased to welcome one of our new County Supervisors, Hilda Solis, who gave the keynote speech. In April, the County League held an excellent workshop on "How we do Advocacy." It featured success stories from our Local Leagues. It was terrific. I wish more Local Leagues had attended and enjoyed this excellent program organized by County Action VP Lola Ungar. See the report in this *Voter*.

LWVC held its convention in San Diego on May 15-17. LA County Leagues were well represented. The convention featured excellent speakers, including Secretary of State Alex Padilla and LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Professor Lisa Garcia Bedolla (UC Berkeley), Carolyn Lukensmeyer (National Institute on Civil Discourse), and Michael Vu (San Diego County Registrar of Voters). Attendees went to plenary sessions (business of the League), workshops, and caucuses on various issues. Each day was a full day. Two key themes that ran through Convention were outreach to young people and communities of color; and civil discourse.

The convention elected new officers – including President Helen Hutchison who had stepped in following Jenny Waggoner's resignation as President. The Convention adopted a Bylaw change for a two-year budget, as well as other Bylaw adjustments. A program was adopted that retains all current positions and updates, by concurrence, the Agriculture position by adding "include a sustainable water supply." No new study was adopted, although death with dignity and elections systems were debated as non-recommended studies. Adopted issues for Education and Advocacy were money in politics, protecting California's environment (including water issues), election reform and voting rights, and minimum/living wage.

Some of our Leagues are now moving into the beginning of the election cycle for 2015 local elections. Make the most of your activities. Use all avenues to publicize your forums and any other venues you provide for your voters.

Don't forget to encourage your candidates to post their information on Smart Voter. Also publicize Smart Voter to your members and communities as a key resource for election information.

Both State and National Leagues have been sending out Action Alerts, and more will come as we move forward. It's important for all of us to respond to these requests and send messages to our legislators on the issues that we are fighting to uphold. This is one of the strengths of our grass-roots tradition and one reason for LWV continuing to have an impact on proposed legislation. Signing up to receive alerts is easy to do on the LWVC and LWVUS websites.

Nancy

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Marilee Scaff (LWV Claremont) was among the 14 women from across the San Gabriel who were honored this year by Congresswoman Judy Chu at her sixth annual Women of Distinction luncheon, held April 18, 2015.

Marilee has for years been one of our most active League members - past president of the local Claremont Area League, a past president of the Los Angeles County ILO (our county League), and instigator and co-chair of our 2005 water study and our ongoing and effective Water Committee, among an endless list of contributions.

While anyone who knows her will realize much was omitted from the summary printed in the Women of Distinction program, our Voter readers deserve to see what was included:

“Dr. Marilee Scaff was born in Texas in November 1915 and moved with her family to Arizona in 1917, when the state was only five years old. After her undergraduate education in Texas, she gained a graduate degree from the University of Chicago and married Alvin Scaff. With World War II underway, Marilee and Alvin Scaff chose to go to the Philippines to help generate peace.

Their teaching at a University there ended in two years of hiding in the mountains of Negros Island, where their first child was born. They were captured by Japanese soldiers, spent two more years in internment camps, and were rescued by MacArthur’s troops, returning home on a troop ship in 1945.

Dr. Marilee Scaff came to Claremont in 1947 and soon became widely involved in her three passions – community service, education, and enjoyment of the natural world.

Amidst joining many community organizations, Dr. Marilee Scaff found time to start her teaching career, first in nursery school, then as director of education for the Congregational Church.

Dr. Marilee Scaff completed her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Counseling at Claremont Graduate School and taught at several universities. In retirement, she became active in even more organizations, including the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens where for thirty years she has worked as a volunteer.

This year for her 99th birthday, she hiked in her beloved Yosemite Valley, at the foot of Half Dome which she climbed (without ropes) 81 years ago.”

Marilee is an amazing women who has led in many League initiatives. She is the consummate role model for all of us.

American Indians in Los Angeles County

by Viola Iungerich

Few residents realize that LA County has more native urban Indians than any other place in the United States. And even fewer people know why this is so.

The interesting story has roots in our history. Before Europe discovered the Americas, there was a thriving native population that covered all of the United States. Evidence shows that as long ago as 11,000 years there have been people in these lands and quite possibly even longer. There are even some controversial pieces of evidence that show humans were here as long as 200,000 years ago. For those interested in these older populations there is a delightful book ("1491" by Charles Mann). In any case, most of the native population was decimated by disease. Natives had no immunity to measles, small pox and other ailments brought by the early explorers from abroad. It is estimated that well over 90% of the population died from this exposure. Eventually over the years many native populations did recover to some extent and by the time the settlers came in the 1600s, Indian populations could be easily found. However, since that time, our current population has been pushing the native peoples off the land.

Currently there are 566 tribes recognized by our government. These are not all the known tribes. Many have so few peoples they are no longer recognized legally, while in other cases all in a tribe have died. Also when the government was moving people into reservations, some people escaped, denied their Indian heritage and lived among us. This has legal ramifications now as some families have a tradition of saying they have Indian heritage but cannot prove it because they cannot trace their ancestors to those that were registered to a tribe as they were moved.

Most of us know of the movement of Indians to reservations, but many do not understand the legal ramifications of these moves. Much of the tragedies of tribes have to do with cultural misunderstandings. Europeans have a linear world view, while native peoples see the world in relational/cyclic terms. Native people do not see the land as something you own but see it more like air that belongs to everyone. People use air, water and land as necessities for life, not as personal belongings. When the United States tried to impose our world view on the Indians, misunderstandings continued to undo the native people. The government assigned quantities of land to individual families based on their number and assumed they would farm the land. But the Indians saw the land as needing to be used by the entire people. The government did not give the land outright to the tribes but let them use it while still considering the reservations federal lands—the government often took back parcels that individual families were no longer using. The tribes of course objected to this.

The government came up with a variety of solutions to these misunderstandings. One solution was to educate (forcible as it turned out) to our world view. In 1878, Indian children were removed from their parents and sent to boarding schools where there were attempts to completely extinguish their Indian culture and substitute the European ways. Indian dress, language and cultural thoughts were forbidden and when these re-indoctrinated children were returned eventually, they often were not accepted back. Many of these Indians then returned to our cities to live as best they could. The effort to stamp out Indian thought and culture continued. In 1881, Indian religion was officially outlawed. The whole native culture was outlawed—a culture that saw life as an integrated cycle that needed to stay in balance to be health. In 1888 the Dawes Act was passed which allowed any reservation land "un-allotted"—that is not currently assigned to some person to be opened

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to settlement. This was during a particularly harrowing time of the Indian wars which did not end until 1890. Very slowly the world changed. However, in the 60's, the government still trying to "help" the Indians, offered them an opportunity to move off the reservations to cities. Los Angeles offered Native Americans (they became citizens in 1924) financial support for education, housing and employment training if they came to the city. And they did. We currently have the largest population of urban Indians—a little over 142,000. However, this offer also was tied to some concerns. Officials were still worried that with their history they might group together and cause problems, so they were spread out all over the county.

In the last century, more people became aware and educated about Indian problems. The differences in culture and world view also became more widely known as did many Indian problems. Because Indians cannot metabolize alcohol, they can easily become alcoholics. Also due to the cultural suppression, depression is common in their populations. In 1957, they were given the right to vote. In 1959 through 1964 with the War on Poverty, resources were put in place to try and heal some of the injustice to the native peoples. In the 70's, the Indians became more empowered to fight for their rights and in 1978 the Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act were signed into law. The reestablishment of Indian rights continues to this day.

In Los Angeles, because of the total number of Indians, there are a variety of support systems, educational systems, and movements. Most county services in Los Angeles are sensitive to the Indian population and many have special units or departments. For example, in the Department of Children and Family Services there is a unit in the department that services Indian children. If an Indian child is brought into the department, a whole set of laws apply called ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act). This is because the tribes see the removal of their children as another way to extinguish the native peoples. The tribe therefore has legal say as to what happens to an Indian child and can opt to take the child back into the tribe or say what happens to the child. Central High School in Los Angeles is a LAUSD high school that has a program for Native Americans that is culturally sensitive where students can obtain a high school diploma. Both UCLA and California State University, Long Beach have American Indian studies.

Since the Indians in this county are from multiple tribes, they have banded together to support each other and to share traditions. There are many POW-WOWs on weekends where natives come together to network, show off their native dress and dances and support one another. If interested, you can attend one of these functions easily by looking on line (see POW WOW calendar).

**How We Took Action – Report from the Count League Workshop
Submitted by Joan Arias (Beach Cities) and Nancy Mahr (Palos Verdes)**

The County Advocacy/Action workshop was held on Saturday, April 25, 2015. Lola Ungar, LWV LA County Action VP, organized the event and despite a small group of attendees, the discussion was lively and exciting. As Lola noted, action and advocacy are very important to the League and League members.

Joanne Leavitt, LWV California Advocacy and Program Director, reminded us that the roots of League are in action. She stated that action is taken after study and the formation of a position. There are many action/advocacy resources available to Leagues on the state and national websites. The remaining panelists described actions or advocacy campaigns taken by their Leagues -- Santa Monica, Claremont Area, Pasadena Area and Whittier – and described some excellent strategies they used.

The Claremont League took action on a water issue. They began with a study that led to a position on community control of its local water. They then joined with other community groups to place a measure on the ballot and work for passage of the measure – successfully. Sally Seven shared a list of the various elements of their comprehensive campaign.

Joan Arias and Kathy Berlin, talked about the development of the LWVBC local position on oil drilling and the successful “No on Measure O” campaign they supported. Joan and Kathy gave a brief history of the oil issue in Hermosa Beach, of the formation of the position and the subsequent actions taken. They acknowledged the leadership of the local environmental groups such as Keep Hermosa Hermosa, Surfriders, Heal the Bay and others. They noted the value placed on our support of the NO on OIL vote by the environmental groups and the community.

Donovan Steutel represented the Pasadena Area League. They took action on campaign finance disclosure, a path forward that remains open in the wake of the Citizens United decision. They worked with the City Clerk and City Council members to bring disclosure to the public.

Control of the Santa Monica Airport rules and regulations was the focus of LWVSM’s action/advocacy effort, as described by Barbara Inatsugu. A conflict of views on where control should rest – with the city or with the airport administration – led to competing ballot measures. The League worked with other community groups to support and pass the measure maintaining city control. Barbara noted that the League had to make the decision on whether it would only do public education on the issue or take an advocacy position.

Margo Reeg, LWV Whittier president, spoke on their work relating to the issue of open city council seats vs. council seats by designated districts with an elected mayor. The League gave public input at meetings and submitted proposals for new district lines.

Following the presentations, the panel discussed lessons learned and responded to questions from the attendees. Among the “Lessons Learned” noted by the presenters were the following:

- ❖ Use the resources available to you.
- ❖ Big money does NOT always win!
- ❖ Partner with other organizations; build relationships.
- ❖ Use advertising (including informational reminders).
- ❖ Focus on the issue and articulate your point in simple terms.
- ❖ Start early!

Those who attended the workshop as well as the panelists considered it a successful morning and well-worth the time and effort.

Notes of Interest

In Memorium

Longtime League member Judy Borash passed away in December 2014.

A League leader and long-time supporter of the County ILO, Judy will be greatly missed.

Save the Date

Summer League Day
Popovers in Pasadena

Saturday, July 18, 2015

Keynote Speaker: LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

LWV LACounty President Nancy Mahr with LWWUS President Elisabeth MacNamara at the LWVC Convention in San Diego.



**LWV Los Angeles County
Board of Directors 2015- 2017**

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Send to: mebarnes@aol.com

Join Us

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. **Find a local League below :**

Beach Cities - beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org

Claremont Area- claremont.ca.lwvnet.org

East San Gabriel Valley- esgv.ca.lwvnet.org

Glendale-Burbank - gb.ca.lwvnet.org

Long Beach Area - lba.ca.lwvnet.org

Los Angeles - lwvlosangeles.org

Palos Verdes Peninsula - lwvpalosverdes.org

Pasadena Area - lwv-pa.org

Santa Monica - lwvsantamonica.org

Torrance Area - lwvtorrancearea.org

Whittier - whittier.ca.lwvnet.org

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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