



League of Women Voters
North Orange
County
www.lwvnoc.org

VOTER

April 2005
714-254-7440
P.O. Box 3073
Fullerton, CA 92834

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of voting age.

Lunch with League: April 28 Information Consequences Since 9/11

The Role of Free Speech in Time of War



Dr. Nancy Snow is Assistant Professor in the College of Communications at California State University, Fullerton. Snow's research, writing, and public speaking center on U.S. foreign policy, American persuasion, influence, and propaganda, communications in the public interest, and the impact of global communications on democratic participation. She is a strong advocate for media accountability and alternative, independent media. Snow is the author of *Information War: American Propaganda, Free*

Speech and Opinion Control Since 9/11 which deals with free speech during a time of war and *Propaganda Inc: Selling America's Culture to the World*.

In response to our request that Dr. Snow speak to Lunch with League she replied, "I'd be happy to discuss the USA Patriot Act as well as other issues related to censorship, right to privacy and civil liberties. I'm currently working on a book on anti-Americanism and America's credibility problem with the world since 9/11 and the war in Iraq."

Dr. Nancy Snow
Lunch with League
April 28, 2005
11:30AM-1:00PM
Sizzler Restaurant
1401 Harbor Blvd.
Fullerton, Cost \$12
Reservations:
714-254-7440
lunchwithleague@
lwvnoc.org

Our Growing Population: A 2020 Vision

A panel of local experts presented an informed vision of the prospects for a livable, effective community. by the year 2020. at a LWVNOC Forum on Saturday, March 5th, at the Fullerton Library. **Joel Rosen, Chief Planner for Fullerton**, described how housing availability, ease of transportation and access to open space in the future will depend upon our ability to foresee trends in population and employment in and around the community. We must then work with neighboring cities and regional agencies as well as a number of special agencies such as Or-

ange County Transit District and Municipal Water District of Orange County to achieve the best match with city priorities and with available funds. It is a difficult and endless balancing act.

The City foresees moderate growth (compared with the rapid growth of past decades) to perhaps 150,000 by 2020. This growth can be accommodated by recycling underutilized land and by some remaining infill in and around downtown. It will be difficult to retain enough open space, and traffic problems will persist but not grow

(Continued on page 2)

Our Growing Population A 2020 Vision

(Continued from page 1)

worse. People will still want to live in Fullerton, to the extent that we handle these problems well.

Jan DeBay, Member of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Water District, described how the agency is planning to meet future water needs. Such plans depend for their success on the identification of stable sources of water, and making appropriate allowance for growth in population and, possibly, in per capita use of water.

We in North Orange County are fortunate in living atop a 350 square mile aquifer, which we have been pumping for about 75% of our needs. However, we have been overdrawing the aquifer in recent years, due to drought and increasing use, and will need to cut back to about 65% of our needs. Purchases from the MWD in Los Angeles have been the major secondary source of water in the past, but the cost is about three times that of the locally pumped water. In addition, MWD is about to lose about half of the water which they have been drawing from the Colorado River, so this is an unattractive backup.

Looking ahead, the Water District has initiated an aggressive program of groundwater replenishment. This has been practiced in a modest way for many years, by trapping river flow and rainwater in ponds, where the water can percolate down into the aquifer. For a

number of years, the Orange County district has been designing and building facilities for reclaiming treated wastewater with advanced purification systems and devising ways of returning it to the aquifer on a large scale. The local program is a world leader in the development of such systems.

Looking farther ahead, the local Water District is experimenting with improved ways of desalination of ocean water as another possible source of fresh water.

Mike Bailey, Director of Planning for the Placentia-Yorba Linda School District, described the problems of maintaining excellence in the schools in a time of growing population

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and shrinking revenues.

The problem of prediction is somewhat eased for schools because the current enrollment in kindergarten and first grade give a "captive" group, who tend to stay in the system through twelfth grade. This firm core is large compared to the size of immigration or emigration in a stable community. Perturbations in the system tend to arise largely from forces outside the community. The repeated "hits" on school budgets, due to state problems and actions, highlight the loss of local control which followed the enactment of Proposition 13. The

enacting of mandates upon schools, often done without real consultation with the schools, and without accompanying funds has presented problems.

Prospects for improvement in the quality of schools in the near future are clouded by the recent succession of funding cuts. However, some relief may be coming due to the leveling off of enrollment in primary grades. This trend, if continued, relieves the need to plan for ever-larger school facilities.

After an extended question and answer period, each panelist was given an opportunity to give a personal view of the prospects and challenges in the future. There seemed to be general agreement that, in most areas, the agencies were doing well under difficult circumstances. A hope was expressed by all that the political and fiscal atmosphere in the state might improve, with more effort going into problem solving and less into dueling philosophies and constituencies.

Ultimately, we must recognize the need to pay for what we ask for. We are 47th among the states in funding per pupil. Can we really expect our schools to perform in the top quarter? We have cut city maintenance budgets city for years. Can we expect smooth streets? We have treated water as unlimited. Should we be surprised if rates go up?

These and other tough questions need to be discussed and faced. We will all have to live with the consequences of our actions.

**BY CHUCK GREENING
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

Presidents' Column
Reflections on League Membership

There are two questions that come to mind when we think of League membership. First, why do people join the League of Women Voters, and second, how can we make sure that the League remains a vital organization worth joining.

Answers to the first question are relatively easy. Most people join League to become better informed, to become more active in civic affairs, to meet interesting people, or to support the League goal of making democracy work. Keeping the League a vital organization is directly related to these answers. Even busy people join the League when they know that League members are interesting, they understand the issues and they work to promote active participation of citizens in government.

One way to increase our visibility and to gain new members is to focus our efforts on the issues that are at the core of our mission. LWVUS President Kay J. Maxwell announced a Democracy Agenda in February which focuses on the most important foundations of our government and nation; election reform, campaign finance reform, nonpartisan redistricting, and civil liberties. Our program committee will be using this Democracy Agenda as a core theme for our work in the coming year. Invite some of the busy people you know to these events and give them the opportunity to join an organization that makes a difference.

Eileen Olmsted, Eleanor Fumanti

Members' Column
Those &%#@# Typos

Our new member rosters were barely off the printing press when those hated pests—typos—started appearing. I apologize for the errors and from time to time will print corrections in this column as the errors become apparent. If you have a new roster, please make the following changes:

On the title page, fix League phone number(714) 254-7440

Correct Edith Bockian's e-mail.....ebockian@yahoo.com

Correct Eileen Olmsted's e-mail.....eileeno@sbcglobal.net

(no dot after her name)

If you do not yet have a new roster, they are being distributed at all League events along with new member folders. Please let me know if you find an error so I can publish a correction.

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to our seven newest members: Joanne Fawley (Fullerton); Janice Foley Cerritos, Anita Larsen (La Habra); and Deborah Ludford (Yorba Linda), Yssa Menzies (Buena Park), Michele Weber (Brea), Gail Wilson (Fullerton); and to two new honorary members: Melinda Beswick (Anaheim) and Claire Schlotterbeck (Brea). We look forward to seeing all of you at League events.

BY ARLINE BURGMEIER, MEMBERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR
714/828-8624 OR ABURGMEIER@SBCGLOBAL.NET.

League of Women Voters
of California
Biennial Convention

Crowne Plaza Hotel
Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove
May 19-22

Volunteer Opportunity

Meet with interesting Leaguers
from all over California.

Be part of the decision
making process.

No experience necessary.

On the job training available.

Volunteers are needed to work at the registration desk, to assist delegates with hospitality, to oversee the workroom computers and copy machines, and to work in plenary sessions as mike monitors, pages and timekeepers. Volunteers will have access to the plenary sessions as observers and may attend any of the special events at cost such as the banquet and special luncheon.

Contact Shirley Bloom

714-870-6593

shirleybloom@msn.com

Legislative Interview with Senator Joseph Dunn

League members throughout California conduct interviews with state legislators each year asking questions prepared by LWVC leaders. Results of the interviews are used by LWVC in lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Senator Dunn represents the 34th Senatorial District covering Buena Park, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, and parts of Fullerton and Anaheim. This is Part One of the interview conducted by LWVNOC members Gloria Ayala, Monika Broome, Barbara Michel and Eileen Olmsted. Part Two of the interview will be in the May Voter.

QUESTION: *How do you think California will balance revenue and expenses in the 2005-06 budget? Do you see a need for increasing revenues? Do you support annual review of tax expenditures as a way of improving tax equity and avoiding more difficult cuts in spending? If you think that there should be cuts, what three areas do you think would provide the most suitable source of savings in state spending?*

The current budget shows a smaller deficit but this is only temporary. Revenues will not match required (i.e. mandated) expenditures in future. Taxes are not keeping up with growing population as California is no longer a "middle class" state; we are now an "urban working" state. During the "Go Years" of high revenue there was money from the stock market and capital gains. Then revenues went down dramatically in 2001. Expansion of California programs such as "Healthy Family" contributed to using up revenues. The people of CA are not willing to accept tax in-

creases and therefore budget cuts will be necessary. Transportation is usually an area for cuts, but the people of CA will not allow cuts in transportation. Possible solution: Look at every service provided for California and decide what the role of the government should be. We will need to pick priorities. zero-based budgeting might help the situation but it is very expensive and time-consuming. Annual review of the budget is absolutely necessary and then priorities need to be set. "We

**"The greatest
motivating factor
among legislators
is political fear,
not political will."**

(Sen. Joseph Dunn,
Legislative Interview 3/18/05)

are at bare bones." Waste simply hasn't been found.

QUESTION: *What should the legislature do to ensure that all Californians have access to health care?*

I supported Prop. 72 (Burton Bill). It would have been a wonderful first start. The more we leave health care to an open market approach, the more hospitals are going to fail. Critical care emergency rooms are collapsing. Public hospitals will continue to go under. Currently return on investment is the #1

priority. Public interest used to be the #1 priority. The issue is economics. A decision needs to be made. Do we go with a market approach or a no market approach to health care? At this time, the public is not in favor of a universal health care system. But eventually something will have to be done.

QUESTION: *Do you think that reform of any of the following is desirable? If not, why not? If yes, what should the legislature do? Redistricting, term limits, financing of campaigns, and Proposition 13 provisions concerning reassessment of commercial property.*

REDISTRICTING

"As drawn districts are theoretically nonresponsive to constituents." Districts ought to make people more responsive. Districts need to be drawn according to commonality. This issue won't be seen on the ballot. In California Democrats oppose this reform and Republicans support it. On the national level, it is reversed. In California, everyone concedes that if neutral redistricting is done, Democrats would have the majority in Sacramento would lose in the Congressional elections. Only if neutral redistricting were done on a national level so affecting all states would it be fair.

ORANGE COUNTY VOTER

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The Orange County Voter is a monthly column written by LWVOC Board of Supervisors Observer, Trish Harrigan.

About 5 years ago, when the dot-com boom was still on, investments were doing well and lots of tax money was coming in, the BOS jumped on a state-wide bandwagon and gave public safety workers expanded benefits which allowed them to retire at age 50 with a pension of 3% of final salary for each year of service. Naturally, this increased pension costs for county government. But no one worried. Then in 2004, the board approved expanded health benefits for regular workers and allowed retirement, with benefits, as early as age 55. This plan goes into effect 7/1/05. About 814 county workers promptly indicated they planned to retire. More costs for the county.

In August, 04, a consultant looked hard at the numbers and said the unfunded pensions and healthcare liabilities are much bigger than had been figured before, and "something had be done". Retirees may have to pay more for their insurance, or get less benefits, or maybe shift to HMOs. A committee has been working, but Mr. Campbell says he wants it to "work faster", that a solution is needed by July. The union reps say the county is not listening to them, that they have lots of good ideas to reduce costs, that the benefits are con-

tractual and can't be changed. Mr. Campbell isn't so sure about that.

At a 2/15 meeting, an interim report was given by staff, and several speakers for the retirees outlined how difficult life is for those in their 70's and 80's who earned less, have lower pensions, and are dealing with rising medical costs. Mr.

**"...unfunded pensions
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Correa said he hoped a reasonable solution could be reached. Mr. Campbell warned those considering retirement to think carefully about how to pay for health costs, that the county would have to make changes. Mr. Norby spoke of worldwide demographic issues and said that the county has to fulfill obligations to current retirees but current and new employees will have to take less.

And your observer wondered why apparently no one gave careful scrutiny to the increasing liabilities, or considered that booms end, and that the money flow could slow. But Orange County is not alone in facing serious pension liabilities. Many other municipalities are in the same fix or worse. Only San Francisco, which did not grant expanded benefits to its

safety workers, does not have a problem.

Both Mr. Correa and Mr. Campbell, recently of the legislature, are keen to help with county lobbying in Sacramento, particularly on the funding equity issue. Scott Baugh, county lobbyist, said Assembly member Lynn Daucher had a "new approach" but that there was no point going after the state general fund, how about redevelopment agencies? Mr. Norby was all for that, he doesn't approve of them at all because, he says, they take property taxes and use them for private benefit. Mr. Wilson spoke up for the cities, who depend on redevelopment; he wants to discuss any plans with the League of Cities; Mr. Baugh remarked that the Orange County delegation is mostly from cities and will be protective of them. Mr. Campbell suggested Mr. Norby talk to Ms. Daucher first. Thus are our laws made!

Mr. Silva, however, reports great success in Washington. \$50 million is earmarked in the federal budget proposal now in Congress for the Prado Dam project. The dam must be raised to protect those who live on the Santa Ana River flood plain in Orange County, and Mr. Silva says the Corps of Engineers is now "on board". So we get our tax dollars back, and that is as it should be, thinks Mr. Silva. Much praise for our Washington lobbyist; he is earning his keep.

League Happenings

The League Wins A Battle For Clean Air

On Wednesday, March 9th, the so-called "Clear Skies" legislation, S. 131, failed to pass the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on a 9-to-9 tie vote. The League was an essential member of the coalition to defeat this bill, which would have weakened and delayed the implementation of the Clean Air Act. LWVUS thanks the many League leaders and members who carried the League message to their members of Congress and their constituents. This is a victory for the League and for our fight for clean, healthy air!

Reforming Redistricting

Reforming the process of how legislative and congressional district lines are drawn in California is one of the chief issues occupying the thoughts of the League of Women Voters of California along with Governor Schwarzenegger, initiative proponents, legislators, and other good government groups. The state League recently contributed to the writing of a new report, "Drawing Lines: A Public Interest Guide to Real Redistricting Reform," released by the nonpartisan organizations Demos and the Center for Governmental Studies. Go to the League redistricting Web page at: <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/> for a link to the report and to a press release featuring our endorsement. We are also

meeting with legislators and the press to make the case for a well-crafted legislative proposal that puts redistricting in the hands of an independent commission.

EdSource Forum A Big Success

With only one in 14 California public high schools currently meeting state academic performance goals, education experts convened at EdSource's 2005 Forum, "Shaking Up the Status Quo: The Movement to Transform High School," to debate potential reforms. Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director of Education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and one of the nation's leading experts on high school reform, delivered the forum's keynote address to an audience of education leaders, reform advocates, and parents. California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell made a special appearance in Manhattan Beach. An afternoon panel discussed the challenging question of whether a college-preparatory curriculum should be the default program at all high schools. Robert Schwartz of Harvard University and others discussed the merits of a college-prep curriculum versus "multiple pathways," including more rigorous career education. You can download the speakers' presentations at:

<http://www.edsource.org/forum05pro.cfm>

Board Briefs

At the March 9th Meeting of LWVNOG Board of Directors, four delegates were chosen to represent us at LWVC Convention May 20-22, 2005 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Garden Grove: Arline Burgmeier, Angela Lindstrom, Fran Mathews, and Eileen Olmsted. The Budget and Nominating Committees are meeting in preparation for our Annual Meeting on June 4th. Lynn Daucher will be the speaker at the event.

The Finance Report indicated that we were operating on budget for this fiscal year. The Garage Sale on February 28 raised \$1719. The cost for operating our website will be about \$180 a year.

Forum Video Available

Many thanks to Edith Bockian for organizing the successful forum: Our Growing Population, A 2020 Vision. Adelphia aired the forum on local stations and gave us a copy. Call Edith at 526-5132 if you would like to borrow the tape.

Current and past issues of the Voter are available on line and in color at: www.lwvnoc.org

Can We Trust the Trust Fund?

One in a series of articles on Social Security

BY CONNIE HADDAD

League's support for Social Security comes from its positions on Fiscal Policy and Meeting Basic Human Needs: We support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance and we support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families."

Advocates for privatization of Social Security like to refer to the U.S. Treasury bonds in the Social Security Trust Fund as "just a bunch of IOUs." Yet, at the same time, they are willing to consider borrowing one to two trillion dollars to partially privatize Social Security. How would they borrow? By issuing U.S. Treasury bonds. You can't have it both ways. If the U.S. Treasury bonds being sold by the billions every week to foreign investors are sound and safe, why are the Treasury bonds held by the Social Security administration "just a bunch of IOUs."

The same advocates for privatization also let the false concern spread that the Trust Fund has been "squandered." The money is "gone." But all the money the government borrows through the sale of bonds is gone. It is spent

on current government operations; and it is repaid from future taxes and borrowing. China's money is "gone." Japan's money is "gone." The money you put in a savings bond is "gone." But when those bonds come due, they are always repaid, with interest. The Trust Fund is secure. That is not the problem.

The problem is that powerful interests, either for ideological reasons, or the desire for economic gain, want to privatize Social Security. Thus, the scare tactics to convince people that there is a crisis. Yet, it is repeatedly pointed out, that if changes in the Social Security system were deemed necessary, only modest adjustments would be required to recalibrate the system into solvency.

What you don't hear privatization advocates saying is that the U.S. Government is going to default on its bonded obligations. When that day comes much more than Social Security will be in trouble. Yes, you can trust the Trust Fund. It is its detractors you have to watch out for.

LWVNOG member, Connie Haddad, researches, writes, and speaks on Social Security.

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!

The League of Women Voters is committed to making democracy work across the country and around the world. Join us in educating and encouraging men and women to be active citizens and address the issues that affect our lives—election administration reform, campaign finance reform, civil and human rights, citizen engagement, judicial independence and criminal justice, education, health care, urban sprawl and our natural resources. Go online to lwnoc.org and click on "Join LWV" to become a League Member, or call 714-254-7440

CALENDAR

Executive Committee
Monday April 4, Noon
 Brownstone Café
 305 N. Harbor Blvd.
 Fullerton

Social Justice Student Summit,
Friday, April 8, 2005
8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
Cal State Fullerton
Titan Student Union
www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/volunteer/apathy.htm
 Open to the Public
 Call Eleanor Fumanti for more information:714-879-1782

LWVNOG Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 13
 3:30-5:30 PM
 FJUHS District Offices
 1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
 Fullerton
 714-879-1782

Lunch with League
Thursday April 28, 11:30AM
Dr. Nancy Snow
The Role of Free Speech
In Time of War
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LEAGUE WINS 2005 FREEDOM AWARD

The LWVUS was just notified that it has been chosen as the recipient of the 2005 Freedom Award, given yearly by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). The NASS Freedom Award recognizes and honors those who contribute significantly to the cause of free elections in the United States. The League was honored for its 85-year commitment to the election process



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Voter Editor

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