



League of Women Voters
North Orange
County

VOTER

May 2004

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 and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

ANNUAL MEETING KIT ENCLOSED

Luncheon Speaker Mayor Bev Perry, Brea

Effects of International Trade Agreements on Local Governments

**LWVNOC
Annual
Meeting
May 22nd
Embassy
Suites
Brea**

Are you wondering what the connection is between long time Brea city council person, Bev Perry and international trade agreements? Leaguers who follow globalization issues know the answer. Bev Perry has served on the International Task Force for the National League of Cities and as president of the Forum on Democracy and Trade. After the passage of NAFTA in 1994, local governments became aware of the fact

that Section 11 of the trade agreement gives international corporations the power to bring suit against governments and potentially override their legislative and regulatory authority. Many of these damage claims are based on environmental regulations. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about our local government connections to international trade from our local expert, Mayor Bev Perry.

Survey of the Selection Process for Local Commissions

Local Study Proposed

At the March 24th LWVNOC board meeting, directors recommended adoption of a new local program item: *A Survey of the Selection Process for Local Commissions* in each of the six LWVNOC cities. A guide for doing such a survey has been developed by the Los Altos/Mountain View League. Members in each city would gather information on the selection process with the possible goal of publishing a comparison of the procedures used in our cities or possibly a handbook for citizens in-

terested in applying for appointment to one of the commissions. Members will vote on adopting this local survey at the Annual Meeting on May 22nd.

By coincidence, changes in the appointment process for Fullerton commissions were approved at the April 24 City Council meeting. The League made a statement against the changes because they would narrow the field of potential candidates to serve on the commissions, and also create the potential for "cronyism". The topic is again on the City Council agenda for May 4th

**9:00 Registration
Silent Auction
9:30 Business
Meeting
11:30 Luncheon**

**Cost \$15.00
Reserve by May 14
Call 714-254-7440
or
Send your check:
LWVNOC
1330 Davit Circle
La Habra 90631**

Presidents' Letter

Dear League Members,

The 2004 Annual Meeting will be a time to share our vision for League direction as we elect new officers, plan study programs, adopt a budget and hear Bev Perry share her expertise on international trade issues. If you're a new member, it's a great way to catch onto what League is all about. We expect the salad luncheon to be excellent and the venue to be a good meeting spot. Guests are welcome for the event or just the speaker so spread the word. If you have any new items to contribute to the silent auction, please call Eileen Miller, our development director at 714-528-8985 so she can prepare bid sheets in advance.

Controversy over the security of electronic voting machines exists both in and out of the League. The official position of LWVUS is that paper trails are not the solution to security problems. One thing Orange County Leaguers agreed on in the recent primary was the success of the student poll worker program where senior high school students spent election day working the polls. When Arline Burgmeier spoke to Dennis White at the registrar's office she discovered that schools lose state aid for the missed day. At the supervisor's hearings on primary day voting problems, Arline spoke for LWVNOC praising the effectiveness of the student poll workers. Thanks Arline for presenting the League view.

We hope to see you at Annual Meeting.

Eileen and Eleanor

IMPACT OF CALIFORNIA'S FISCAL CRUNCH ON EDUCATION

Jan Wagner Speaks to Lunch with League

It came as no surprise to League members that this presentation began with a reference to Proposition 13. Jan Wagner, a six-year veteran on the Placentia-Yorba Linda School District Board, and a long-time League member, spoke with authority on the grim financial concerns as featured speaker at Lunch With League on April 22 in Fullerton. Her intimate knowledge of North Orange County political and social climate made her remarks immediately relevant.

Proposition Thirteen has had the long-term effect of reducing local funding of schools from its formerly dominant role to a tiny fraction of school budgets. The bulk of funding now comes from State (94%) and Federal (5%) sources. In addition to assuming the burden of K-12 funding, the legislators at both levels have exercised their power of the purse to accompany the money with a large and growing list of mandates, directing more than a third of budgeted funds to specified objectives.

"A cumulative cut of 14% in the total school budget for the current year."

Earmarked funding imposes several burdens upon School Boards:

- It limits the ability of the local Boards to control their budgets.
- Mandates have been made for a variety of reasons, not always consistent with each other, and sometimes in conflict.
- Earmarked funds are often insufficient to pay for the mandated programs, increasing the pressure on the rest of the budget.
- Mandated programs may divert class time from core programs.
- There have been efforts to remove some of the mandated programs, but each one has its champions, so reversal is tough.

All of the problems indicated above were evident in the 2000/01 school year. But the succeeding four years have seen overall California budgets drop from \$24 billion surplus to \$14 billion deficit. In the P-YL District, these cuts have been reflected in successive cuts of \$1.2 million, \$3.6 million, \$4.7 million, and \$4.3 million, leading to a cumulative cut of 14% in the total school budget for the current year. The Board has tried to protect classroom activities as much as possible, but there are limits to the extent to which that can be done, since teacher salaries are the dominant item in costs. This year, the District has had to send layoff warnings to seventy teachers, but hopes to find ways to retain as many as fifty of them.

The effects of these cumulative cuts in resources have been pervasive. Recruiting of new teachers is hard hit by the uncertainty of retention once hired, as well as the growing workload on the depleted staff. Class sizes have increased, fees have gone up, materials and supplies have been pinched, support services have suffered. No immediate relief is in sight.

In spite of the challenges, local schools have managed to improve test scores, to turn out National Merit Scholars, and to achieve awards. Schools need all the help they can get from parents and communities to maintain quality education for our future citizens. And they need to achieve a return to local control over more of their funding and policies. Plenty of work for concerned citizens.

BY CHUCK GREENING

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ORANGE COUNTY (ILO)

FIRST CALL: 38TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Saturday, June 5, 2004

The Fountains at Sea Bluff, Dana Point

9:30 to 2:00 p.m.

Cost is \$20 - includes lunch and materials

LL Presidents will provide Meeting Kits to LL delegates.

MARY-EVELYN BRYDEN AND JOAN RIDDLE, CO-PRESIDENTS, LWVOC

Meet our Members: Joan and Burnie Cohen

BY ARLINE BURGMEIER, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

He likes fishing, she likes crossword puzzles; he likes to tell jokes, she likes to read. Both like going to concerts and traveling together. Like most retired couples, Burnie and Joan Cohen have individual interests yet enjoy doing things together, too. Among their shared interests is the League of Women Voters.

Both have lost track of how many years they have been members, but Joan estimates it's been over 40 years for her. During that time she has held numerous positions in the League and served as NOC president from 1990-93. Burnie guesses that he joined the League about 10 years ago. He, too, has been an active participant and for several years coordinated the League's contracted supervision of CSUF student elections. In addition, Joan and Burnie are members of the county ILO board. Their shared life had its beginning many years ago. Although they knew each other in high school, Joan and Burnie didn't really discover each other until they were both students at UCLA. He asked her out, and it didn't take long for love to blossom. Joan and Burnie settled in Fullerton a few years after they were married and Fullerton has been their home for 46 of those 53 years.

Once their two children were born, Joan put her budding career in social services on hold while Burnie

pursued a career in business. Years later he returned to school and earned a teaching credential from CSUF that enabled him to have a second career in business education and vocational education in the Pomona Unified School District. When the kids grew up Joan resumed her work in social services. Then she, too, returned to school, earned a master's degree in public administration from USC and started a second career as a county administrator of social projects such as Head Start and a foster parent program.

Now Joan and Burnie are retired, but are active in the community as well as in the League. "Grandpa Cohen," as the kids call him, volunteers as a classroom aide at Richman Elementary School, where he reads to kindergarten, second and fourth grade classes. Joan has served on the Fullerton Human Relations Committee, worked with the YWCA's Tuition for Tots program that funds childcare and was the co-founder of an agency working to raise money for scholarships for children in foster care.

Joan and Burnie look forward to traveling more, something they both enjoy. A recent trip aboard a small ship took them to the uninhabited Kuril Islands north of Japan to study the wildlife. It's hard to imagine where the next trip might take this dynamic duo.

Regional Meetings on Voluntary Preschool For All

The LWVC has agreed to be a co-sponsor with Children Now and Preschool California in holding regional meetings around the state on the topic of voluntary preschool for all. The meetings will be held in Riverside, Fresno, Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego and Santa Clara during April, May, June, exact dates to be determined.

The agenda will be an overview of the value of preschool for kids and society; overview of statewide momentum; what is happening locally; and establishing local support groups.

Although current legislation and initiatives will be mentioned, support for any will not be promoted.

LWVC has positions which deal with this--Child Care, Children and Family Issues position paper (Working Party for Children), and the LWVUS Equality of Opportunity and Early Intervention for Children at Risk. This would also be good background information--for our current update on Education. If you are interested in being notified of the meetings, please contact LWVNOG Program Chair Dr. Kay Bruce 714-921-1308 kay-bruce@sbcglobal.net

Leadership Council

Kay Bruce and Eleanor Fumanti will attend the State Leadership Council in Sacramento on May 15 and 16. The theme, Communication ...Making the Connection was chosen because communication is vital to the League at all levels. This past year, special financial problems at the state office limited open discussion of the issue. Council will be a time when the events of the incredible year will be freely discussed.

Secretary of State, Kevin Shelly will speak at the Council banquet.

Not a Member Yet? Please Join!

The League of Women Voters is strictly nonpartisan; we never support or oppose any political party or candidate. At the same time, we are wholeheartedly political, working to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to all women and men of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join as associate members.

Yes, I want to join. Enclosed is my check for \$55.00 payable to LWVNOC.

Please send me more information about League and its publications.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ Zip _____

Mail to the League of Women Voters North Orange County

P.O. Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834

714-254-7440



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Annual Meeting Kit Enclosed

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