



League of Women Voters
North Orange
County

VOTER

September 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. Membership is open to men and women of voting age.

September Happenings

Public Forum

No Child Left Behind Act Recipe for Success or Failure?

Is the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act a recipe for success or failure? Many questions exist about such issues as availability of sufficient numbers of highly qualified teachers, testing fairness for English language learners and special education students, conditions under which students can attend a different school, and federal law override of state education law.

This is the topic to be discussed at a community forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of North Orange County. A panel of six will explore the law and the reality of its application in local school districts. While there seems to be widespread

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Thursday, Sept. 9th

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.

Fullerton Public Library

353 W. Commonwealth

For more information:

Phone 714-879-7445

E-mail vgbfnb@aol.com

Gala Kickoff Brunch

Sunday, September 19, 2004

Noon - 3:00 PM

Coyote Hills Golf Club

1440 Bastanchury Rd. Fullerton

Just East of Brea Blvd.

Lavish Buffet—Cost \$30

Mail Checks by September 7th

RSVP 714-254-7440

LWVNOC, PO Box 3073

Fullerton CA 92834

Pat Ganer Ph.D.

Back By Popular Demand

Democracy 2004

*A Chance to Understand the
Presidential Campaign*

A year ago, Dr. Pat Ganer, speaking to Lunch With League, provided an informed, witty dissection of the cumbersome, tiresome, costly process of selecting a President. As it turned out, she predicted many of the twists and turns of the campaigns we have all been watching, sometimes in horror.

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From Your Presidents

The League of Women Voters is seen by the public at large as the premier organization to provide unbiased information about candidates and issues and to promote active participation in government. Sometimes there is confusion because the League also advocates for issues based on member study and consensus. But when it comes to Voters Service, the League is unparalleled. That is why in an election year it is so important that we have visibility and are perceived to be providing a valued service to the general public.



Shirley Bloom, LWVNOC, registering voters at a World Wrestling Entertainment event at the Pond.

What is YOUR local League doing to provide that service? Our first chance will be at the “No Child Left Behind” Forum to be held at the Fullerton Public Library on Thursday September 9th. This event will present several different points of view on very important federal legislation and its impact on our local communities. Later we will be giving candidates a chance to “strut their stuff” at candidate forums in Placentia, La Habra, Fullerton and Buena Park. In addition, we will give nonpartisan presentations on the pros and cons of the 16 ballot measure and distribute the LWVC Pros and Cons publication.

Maybe this is the time when you can do a small part in helping League maintain its visibility. Call Eileen at 714-441-1659 if you have any amount of time to help out between now and November 2nd.

Eileen Olmsted
Eleanor Fumanti

Diversity Includes Opinions

There are important decisions facing our nation, our state and our local communities in the coming months. Feelings are intense on many of these issues and Leaguers like to make their voices heard. However, I would like to offer a word of caution. One of the things that attracted me to the League was the sense that all opinions were respected even when people disagreed. In the current climate civility is very often missing in our political discourse, and the lack of it discourages many people from participating in the process. The League can do a great service by helping to return some of that civility to our political life and discussions. At a League meeting stick to the issues and be sensitive to comments

made about political parties and individual office holders. Derogatory remarks should never be in order. Respect the opinions of those who may have differing opinions, belong to a different political party, or group. Diversity is more than color, age, or economic status. If we are serious about diversity, we should make all feel welcome.

Best wishes to all of you for a successful year. Let us work together to inform Californians about the issues and to make this a record year for voter turnout and involvement.

Jackie Jacobberger
President, LWV California
president@lwvc.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

BY ARLINE BURGMEIER, MEMBERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

Thank you to all who renewed their memberships so promptly! You're terrific! I hope that with a gentle reminder the rest of our members will renew soon. Use the renewal form printed on the cover of this issue of the Voter. Just fill it out and send it with your check to P.O. Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834. Thanks. You're terrific, too! We appreciate all our members, both those who are active and those who show support through continued membership.

Those who attended a recent membership committee meeting agreed that the most effective way to recruit new members is through a personal invitation from a current member. "Membership is Everyone's Responsibility" will be our motto for this year. Adding members to our League allows us to expand our Voter Services and strengthens our influence in shaping public policy. It also gives new people

the opportunity to become active and informed members of the community.

All of us can help build membership by talking to others about League whenever the opportunity presents itself. Reminding fellow voters of the wealth of election information on the SmartVoter website is an easy way to spread the message about League. Our League calendar this year is packed with opportunities to expand your horizons through the League of Women Voters. So please help build membership by inviting a potential member to a League event. Likely prospects include seniors, especially newly-retired people; members of local organizations, such as AAUW or chambers of commerce; and faculty members at local universities and colleges. Or you can give me the name and address of a prospective member and I will contact him/her personally and provide an invitation and League information.

Arline Burgmeier 714-828-8624
aburgmeier@earthlink.net

LWVNOC MYSTERY MEMBER

ARE YOU OUR
MYSTERY MEMBER?

Some one sent us a blank membership renewal form without a check mailed in an envelope with a Dr. Sues stamp. If you rush through the chore of check writing, check it out. Perhaps you're our mystery member!

agreement on the need for accountability and the intent of the law, there are concerns about its implementation and its compatibility with California's accountability system.

Ronald Wenkart, General Counsel for the Orange County Department of Education, will address the law. Rick Pratt, Assistant Executive Director of the California School Boards Association will speak to the policy and legislative implications. Ann O'Rourke, Director of Educational Services in the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, will address NCLB from the K-12 district perspective. Shirley Guy, a CTA political

No Child Left Behind Act, Public Forum

(Continued from front page)

consultant, will have the teachers' view while Fourth District PTA Education Director Gisela Meier will speak for the parents. Completing the panel is Burnie Dunlap, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce, whose input will reflect the business point of view.

The League presents this Forum to help educate the public about the No Child Left Behind Act. Additional information about the forum can be obtained by phone at 714-879-7445 or by e-mail: vgfbnb@aol.com.

What is a Structural Budget Deficit?

Many experts believe that California faces a “structural budget deficit.” This means that with the current revenue structure (e.g., taxes, fees, and other sources), the state has insufficient income to maintain services at the current level. Each year, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) publishes a forecast of the California fiscal situation for five years into the future. In November 2003, the LAO’s estimate was that without corrective action, the ongoing gap between revenue and expenditures is about \$14 billion dollars, assuming that the state continued funding the Vehicle License Fee backfill, as Governor Schwarzenegger has promised it will.

The LAO has also analyzed the budget the governor has proposed for 2004-2005. This budget proposes significant reductions in expenditures. These included reduced expenditures for education, transportation, social services and a ten percent reduction in Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. There are increases in fees, such as increased tuition for higher education, but no increase in general taxes. According to the LAO, about 37 percent of the budget savings are one-time savings. The office concludes that even if the budget were enacted as proposed, the General Fund would face a shortfall of about \$88 million for 2004-05, and a continuing structural deficit of about \$7 billion dollars.

In its analysis of the 2004-05 budget, the California Budget Project (CBP) attempted to refute the governor’s assertion that, “If the government had simply spent at the same rate that California’s economy has grown, the state budget would be balanced today.” According to the CBP, state spending has not kept pace with the growth in personal income. In addi-

tion to the loss of revenues from the decline in collection of the personal income tax, the CBP identifies several other areas of revenue loss. These include sales tax (service consumption is growing and not taxed), Internet, mail order sales and the phase-out of federal estate taxes. Moreover, corporations are paying a smaller percentage of their net incomes in corporate income taxes. Shifting costs to local governments also account for some of the savings in the 2004-05 budget.

In its publications the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is essentially in agreement with the CBP and the LAO about the reasons for the current budget situation. It also identifies the drop-off in revenues from personal income tax on stock options and capital gains as the major factor in the decline in General Fund Revenues, and asserts that these revenues are “unlikely to re-

turn to peak values in the foreseeable future.” The PPIC also points out that voter initiatives limit the flexibility of the state’s legislature.

An ongoing activity of the PPIC has been a series of statewide surveys of Californians. A recent survey showed widespread support for the governor but widespread distrust of state government in general. Respondents are generally committed to funding education, local governments, and health and human services. In the responses to the survey about 64 percent stated they would be willing to pay higher taxes to maintain current levels of support for K-12 education. They overwhelmingly opposed an increase in the Vehicle License Fee or state sales tax. They support “sin” taxes—although even doubling the state’s tax on cigarettes would have only a very small effect on the state’s revenue stream.

**“...state spending
has not kept pace
with the growth in
personal income.”**

ORANGE COUNTY BUDGETS AGAIN

As this is being written during the first week of August, California's governor and legislature have, *mirabile dictu*, managed to produce a budget. Whether it is a sensible, honest, and good-for-the-people budget remains to be seen. The county, abiding by law, had an approved budget by the legal deadline of June 30. It totaled \$4.6 billion, smaller by \$155 million than the 03-04 budget. But it is in no way the final word for FY 04-05. When county staff looked at what can be expected from state government it used the governor's first take, in January, as the basis for its figuring. Those figures have changed a lot since, and in fact some of the feared cuts have been replaced. It will take staff until at least September to parse the final numbers and be able to give the Supervisors some idea of, as Mr. Wilson put it "what we are working with."

What is really worrying the supervisors is the Local Government Agreement between the governor and a coalition of cities, counties, special districts and redevelopment agencies. Not that they don't like the protections for local revenues that the agreement contains; and the county can come up with its share of the \$1.3 billion per fiscal year that the state is going to "borrow" from the locals for two years, by tapping reserves. But one part of it is not good for Orange County. The measure would lock in each local government's share of the property tax dollar; county government would be stuck for ever more at 6% of the property tax dollar, the lowest share of any county in the state. The county's lobbyists have tried all summer to find a loophole that Orange County could slide through and achieve some measure of equitable distribution but nothing has surfaced to indicate any success.

As part of the budget process the legislature agreed that this agreement will be on the ballot as a constitutional amendment: Number 1-A. The voters will face another complicated ballot measure, the full consequences of which may or may

not be understandable or even foreseeable. At the same time there will be another ballot measure on the same subject, Proposition 65, and it contradicts some of what is in the first one! Every group wants its money protected by the constitution, even though this tactic makes general budgeting harder all around. Isn't state government just grand?

After the start of the fiscal year on July 1 the board's agendas are full of items to approve agreements with private contractors who do the actual work of providing county services. For example: \$785,372 to the Orange County Mental Health Association for a year's services to mentally disabled homeless. \$14 and a half million to

Correctional Managed Care Medical Corporation for medical services to the jails for a year. \$236,059 to Clean Street in the north county and \$75,094 to Webco Sweeping in south county for street sweeping services, for a year. Lots of jobs in government for the private sector!

**"What is really
worrying the supervisors
is the Local Government
Agreement"**

The Supervisors are keenly interested in what the Registrar of Voters is doing to prepare for the November election and get regular reports. The mantra seems to be training, training and more training for the poll workers and Mr. Roderman was urged to look for volunteers among county and city workers.

And last but not least, there is a new gadfly. He tends to speak at least 5 or 6 times per meeting, on a variety of topics. He disapproves of the sheriff accepting a grant for State Homeland Security because "money is being spent on trampling our civil rights". He doesn't really trust electronic voting at all. He thinks that cuts should not be made in mental health outreach services, "the problems will be on the streets." Mr. Wilson is always polite as he says "thank you for your input" but no changes are ever made. The gentleman seems to have taken up county government as his retirement hobby!

Leagues in Action...

First Ever Laguna Beach Election Festival.

The Laguna Beach Election Festival is an inclusive civic event designed to facilitate citizen education and in-depth deliberation of issues by bringing together Orange County voters, candidates, organizations, and the proponents/opponents of ballot measures. The festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 2, 2004 from noon to 4:00 PM at Laguna Beach High School

Highlights include the introduction of national, state, county, and local candidates,

. Candidates or their representatives will staff informational tables. The proponents and opponents of the fourteen propositions on the November 2004 ballot will staff informational tables. Community and political groups representing a diversity of viewpoints will staff informational tables. *For information call the League of Women Voters, 949-494-9928.*

Activities on Civil Liberties

LWVUS has raised the issue of civil liberties to the highest level of legislative priorities. They have created a special section on the LWVUS website which includes questions for federal and local candidates, ideas for marking the anniversary of the Patriot Act, ideas for legislative action and Liberty Circle materials.

To view Civil Liberties infor-

mation on the LWVUS web site:

From the LWVUS homepage (www.lwv.org), go to the "Get Involved" section. Civil liberties is listed as the third *Hot Issue*. Clicking on this takes you to the "Civil Liberty" area, which includes Liberty Circles, resource links and LWVUS letters to Congress. It also includes a "What can I do?" option. This link takes members to a set of organizing materials, background information and an earlier list of what the League has done to support civil liberties.

Top Five Risks to Eligible Voters in 2004

- ◆ Voter Registration
Ensure timely transmittal from DMV and other agencies to registration authorities. Accept all registration forms with adequate eligibility information.
- ◆ Erroneous Purging
Do not purge voter rolls close to Election Day Check for accuracy before using any list of potentially ineligible voters.
- ◆ Problems With New ID Requirements
Educate voters on the ID they should bring to the polling place. Recruit and train bilingual poll workers to assist limited English-proficient voters.
- ◆ Difficulties With Voting Systems
Educate voters on how to operating voting machines. Institute management safeguards

and testing of all machines.

- ◆ Failure to Count Provisional Ballots

Ensure that eligibility to vote in the federal election is the test for counting provisional ballots in federal contests. Set a statewide, uniform, nondiscriminatory process for issuing and counting of provisional ballots.

Campaign Finance Reform

LWVC representatives to the California Clean Money Campaign, met to discuss a long-term strategy for the implementation of Clean Money in California. Assembly member Loni Hancock is expected to reintroduce her Clean Money legislation (AB2949) again in the new session. In support of that effort, organizational representatives decided to try a more extensive campaign throughout the state to get additional legislators to sign on as co-sponsors. Not anticipating success with a ballot measure sponsored by the Legislature, we will also work toward placement of an initiative on the ballot in the future.

The LWVC board has recommended that each local League be encouraged to have League or community meetings about the Clean Money Campaign. The LWVC will also be issuing statewide action alerts as Assembly member Hancock's legislation goes through the legislative process.

LWVNOC Board Briefs

- ◆ Annual financial report submitted by treasurer Fran Mathews. Funds available July 1, 2003: \$12,413; June 30, 2004: \$13,313.38.
- ◆ Board approval to investigate adding Cypress and La Palma to LWVNOC.
- ◆ Program VP, Kay Bruce, reported that two grants have been approved from the Hewlett Foundation: \$500 to be used for the Education Position Update and \$1000 to be used for activities in support of our Community College position.
- ◆ Development director Eileen Miller reported the fund raising goal for the year is \$3800. Garage sale is scheduled for February 26, 2005. A donor data base will be developed for appeals to non League members and contributions also will be solicited from members.

Orange County is a Donor County

The following is the text of a letter sent to Assembly member Bates from LWVOC.

California is a donor state to the federal government, to the tune of \$20 billion per year. In a similar manner, Orange County is a donor county to the state. It receives only a 7% share of property taxes collected, the lowest of all 58 counties!! Locking that inequity into the state constitution would be a grave injustice to every taxpayer in Orange County.

We urge you to oppose any attempt to make Orange County a permanent donor county. Orange County represents some 10% of the state's tax revenues. Yet your constituents are painfully aware of our donor status. This must be corrected! Please - do not lock us into last place in the state of California.

The League of Women Voters of Orange County proudly joins the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the Orange County Treasurer /Tax Collector, and the bi-partisan Orange County Congressional delegation in opposing any attempt to constitutionally lock into place a specific share of our property tax revenue.

Democracy 2004

(Continued from front page)

At our Kickoff Luncheon for 2004-2005, Dr. Ganer will return to speak to us again, emphasizing the remaining weeks of the campaign. She is an articulate, informed specialist in Campaign Communication and Strategies, having presented papers at numerous national and international conferences. She teaches at Cerritos College and UC Long Beach, presenting courses in Speech Communication and Political Science. In addition to these academic accomplishments, she has been a Political Analyst for the LA Times, and was a commentator on the George W. Bush speech at the 2000 Convention, for MSNBC.

In urging you to take advantage of this opportunity, I can do no better than to paraphrase our announcement of Dr. Ganer's presentation at Lunch With League last year: If you are AT ALL interested in the process of governance and how the selection of President affects it, you should not miss the Kickoff Luncheon, to be held at the Coyote Hills Country Club from noon to 3pm on Saturday, September 19. You can make reservations or get more information by calling 714-254-7440. The cost of this event is

CALENDAR

Public Forum
No Child Left Behind Act
Thursday, Sept. 9, 6:30 PM
 Fullerton Public Library
 353 W. Commonwealth

LWVNOC Board Meeting
Wednesday, Sept. 8, 3:30-5:30 PM
 FJUHS District Offices
 1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
 Fullerton

Gala Kickoff Brunch
Sunday, Sept. 19, Noon-3:00 PM
 Coyote Hills Golf Club
 1440 E. Bastanchury Road
 Just east of Brea Blvd. in Fullerton
RSVP By Sept. 7th. 714-254-7440

Speakers Training for Pros and Cons of Ballot Measures
Sat. Sept. 18, 10:00AM-2:00PM
 Fountain Valley Library
 Call Shirley Bloom, 714-870-6593

LWVNOC Ex. Comm. Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 30, 11:00 AM
 809 N. Ford Ave. Fullerton

Scheduled to date:
Candidate Forums City Councils
October 7, La Habra
October 12, Fullerton
October 14, Placentia
October 19, Buena Park

Needed

Silent Auction Items

Donate those great items you have tucked away.

We'll auction them at the Gala Kickoff on September 19th.

Please call Eileen Miller
 714-528-8985



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North Orange County
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Have You Renewed Your Membership Yet?

Voter Editor

Eleanor Fumanti

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