



League of Women Voters
North Orange
County

VOTER

October 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, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Global Democracy 2004

Dr. Pat Ganer, long-time Professor at Çerritos College, and sometime analyst of Presidential Debates, was featured speaker at the League of Women Voters North Orange County Kick-off Meeting and Luncheon on September 19th at the Coyote Hills Golf Course Clubhouse on the topic "Global Democracy 2004".

Dr. Ganer started her discussion of this huge, nebulous topic with a necessary first step: defining democracy. A typical first attempt might be "Everyone gets a vote, and the majority wins". But what about Gore in 2000 — he had a half-million vote edge in the popular vote, and lost! And what about the 2/3 vote needed to pass a tax bill in California? Is the USA not a democracy after all?

In time, a working definition can be devised. "Exceptional Cases" can be constructed against most or all of these criteria, but the underlying rights must be addressed. The definition should include: fully free and fair elections, rule of law, with an independent judicial system, civil liberties (free speech, assembly, worship, etc), minority rights respected, independent press and broad-

cast media, military controlled by legislative body, not the Chief Executive, property rights protected. A recent statement, purporting to show stunning progress in the advance of global democracy, asserted that the count of democracies in the world had expanded from 43 in 1976 to 120 in 2004. Stunning progress, indeed. But if we start applying the "true democracy" criteria, the numbers shrink dramatically. Saddam Hussein was re-elected by a 99% vote shortly before the American attack. Does anyone believe that was a fair and free election? The president of Pakistan has recently stated his intention to hang onto his direct control of the military. Putin has recently reworked the Russian constitution significantly.

When the above list of criteria is applied to the list of 120 democracies, the number shrinks dramatically. The list of "real democracies" is generally agreed to be somewhere in the thirties. They are clustered in Europe, with the addition of the USA, Canada, Japan, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

So, what does the term "Global Democracy" mean? The reduced list is not distributed over the globe, and it covers far less than half of the world population. What role should and can America play in bringing about Global Democracy? It seems clear that we should be encouraging, by words and deeds, pro-

(Continued on page 2)



LUNCH with LEAGUE

Ballot Measures
Pros and Cons

Thursday
October 28th
11:30 AM-1:00 PM
Sizzler
1401 N Harbor
Fullerton
Cost \$12
Call 714-254-7440
By October 25th
Steak, Chicken or
Salad Bar

From Your Presidents

Wow! Our League year begins officially in September and what a beginning it's been! The No Child Left Behind Act Forum was the first event in our update of the LWVC Education Position. The committee assembled a panel worthy of a Washington think tank. Panelists included experts from the California School Boards Association, the Orange County Department of Education, the California Teachers Association and the Fourth District PTA. If you missed the event, be sure to catch it on Adelphia. We'll be publicizing the schedule as soon as it's available. Expenses for the forum were funded by a mini grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Back by popular demand, Pat Ganer's talk on Global Democracy 2004 for the Kickoff Luncheon at

Coyote Hills Golf Club could not have been timelier coming as it did two days before President Bush's and Kofi Annan's addresses to the United Nations. Pat's presentation was so packed with information that members who attended the event and those who missed it will all want to read Chuck Greening's front page summary

The Voters Service committees have scheduled seven Candidate Forums, about twenty presentations on the pros and cons of the ballot measures, and continue to register voters and demonstrate the new voting machines.

LWVNOC is proud of these accomplishments. Many thanks to the enthusiastic members who make them possible.

Eileen Olmsted and Eleanor Fumanti

Global Democracy 2004

(Continued from page 1)

gress toward real, open democracy around the world. America's voice is powerful. But our history has shown that we act as though what we really seek is stability. Our long-term, close relationship with Saudi Arabia, financial support for Egypt, and many other examples show the world that we support non-democratic governments when it is in our interests. If we wish to spread real democracy around the world, we will have to find a way to work around these embarrassing connections.

But those problems are in the past. Why isn't more change taking place? The major forces acting upon our leaders from inside our country come from entrenched, powerful corporate entities, and they value stability above all.

Then why doesn't the American voting public demand change? In truth, the American voting public is not knowledgeable about world politics, and not much interested in learning about it. Only in time of war does geography grab the attention of the public. And this is not a new weakness. A century ago, Ambrose Bierce said "War is God's way of teaching Americans geography". After the war, interest dies down again.

But, surely, we do know a little bit about the world. Where do Americans get their modest store of information? A recent survey showed that a ma-

jority get it from Fox TV News. And a majority of those think we found WMDs in Iraq! The same survey found that the 18 to 24 year old cadre gets their news from the late night comedians on TV!

But can't the candidates help educate us? The consensus among news professionals is that Bush speaks in platitudes and Kerry speaks in incomprehensibles. Not much help there.

Debates to the rescue? The issues are complex, and the public is not inclined to evaluate complex issues carefully. Raised on sound bites, our electorate seems willing to settle for the gaffes, slips, and ill-timed gestures of the candidates, repeated endlessly by 24-hour news TV, long after any memories of the debate itself have faded.

Our problem, then, is that there are at least three complex foreign policy issues in play at this time: Iraq, Terrorism (No, they aren't the same), Nation-building (The Military should not be trying it). Understanding any one of these three requires considering a mass of complex detail. The prospects for intelligent decisions are cloudy, at best.

Democracy is hard to maintain. When Ben Franklin, was queried by a citizen outside Constitution Hall as to whether they were getting a republic or a monarchy, he replied "A republic, if you can keep it."

**BY CHUCK GREENING
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

October Membership Column

BY ARLINE BURGMEIER, MEMBERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

It's good to be back in League after the summer hiatus. Let's start off the 2004-2005 year by welcoming fourteen new members who joined LWVNOG since January.

Gloria Ayala (Fullerton); Janie Bonfanti (Yorba Linda); Lawrence Graaf (Placentia); Thomas Hamilton (Fullerton); Lynn Hanks (Fullerton); Pam Keller (Fullerton); Doug Matthews (Brea); Beverley Miller (Fullerton); Michelle Miller (Fullerton); Greta Nagel (Fullerton); Sara Peterson (Garden Grove); Roberta Rumiselle (Placentia); Lee Sjostrom (Fullerton); and Margaret Wyoski (Fullerton). I hope that we'll see a lot of these new members at the many upcoming League activities.

Tell me if I'm wrong, but I think we may have a first in NOG's history: three generations of women who are concurrently members of our League. Wanda Shaffer is the grandmother, Shannon Peterson is her daughter and

Sara Peterson is her granddaughter. Congratulations for setting a record. I know we have several husband-wife pairs on our roster. Are there any other related members?

This year we are asking all of you to participate in our "Membership is Everyone's Responsibility" campaign by bringing a prospective member to a League activity, by providing him/her with a League brochure or by giving his/her name and address to me (and I'll do the recruiting). New members replenish our numbers, thus giving us greater man/woman power to carry out the services of the League. League membership in turn benefits those who join by giving them a voice in government and the opportunity to learn about important issues and get acquainted with some very wonderful people. Call or e-mail me with names and addresses. 714/828-8624
aburgmeier@earthlink.net.

Share your copy of
STATE BALLOT
MEASURES
PROS AND CONS
enclosed with this
Issue of the Voter.

LWVC website
Includes links to
Smart Voter,
In Depth information
on Ballot Measures,
AND
Vote with the League
Advocacy on
Ballot Measures.
www.ca.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of Orange County

Orange County Budget Working Group Project

The LWV Orange County (ILO) Convention, June 2004 approved as an Issue for Emphasis the formation of a working group to analyze the county's budget and other financial documents. The goal is to learn about budgeting in general, how the county (and by inference, cities) puts a budget together, the source and use of various funding sources, and other budget arcana. The purpose of learning all this is to be able to consider and take effective League action at county and city levels. Member information will be provided in local League Voters and general meetings

Proposed Work Program: Study and discussion of topics such as: basic budg-

eting; the budget process at county; review and analysis of current county budget documents; review and analysis of the county's Strategic Financial Plan; other topics of interest. Interesting questions: How can the public get early information on budget plans? Can the public influence this process effectively? Who are the real budget players?

Proposed Schedule: begin in November after the election with meetings for information and discussion and contact between meetings primarily by e-mail.

For more information and to indicate interest, please contact organizer.

Tricia Harrigan at 949-721-8382.
harrigan4@cox.net

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND – AT THE FORUM

A highly qualified panel of experts, assembled by the League of Women Voters of North Orange County, examined the No Child Left Behind Act at a League forum on September 9th. The panel discussed the gap between the promise of NCLB and what is achievable in the schools, and reported on strategies for overcoming its flaws.

D. Wenkart, General Counsel to the Orange County Department of Education, combed through the 1200 page text of the NCLB Law, attempting to determine which sections impact the schools in the County, and how. It is not likely that many of the lawmakers who contributed to the document had ever duplicated Wenkart's task. The Law defines an ultimate goal that is clearly unattainable. Wenkart observed that perhaps the most profound legal implication of the law is the historic reversal of the Federal and State roles in public education. This is a change from the long-cherished right of the States to develop their own goals and institutions.

Ann O'Rourke, Director of Educational Services for the Placentia/Yorba Linda Unified School District, described the impact on a local district of the scores of detailed requirements for compliance. One major problem area arises from the approach to determining which schools are "Identified for School Improvement". For example, a failure to have 95% of the students participating in the testing program identifies the whole school as being, somehow, delinquent. The NCLB approach is essentially punitive, while the district prefers to handle these problems by providing extra support when and where needed. The provision that all students attending a so called school improvement school have the option to transfer to another school of their choice, even if the selected school is already crowded, can cause severe problems for both schools.

Gisela Meier, Director of Education for 4th District PTA, pointed out some of the concerns of parents, and PTA's response. They are trying, at all levels, to increase parent participation in support

of school programs. Many parents are distressed by the ever-increasing emphasis on testing, and by the arbitrary labeling of entire schools as "failing." To parents, punishing schools seems to be counter-productive.

Shirley Guy, Political Consultant for the California Teachers Association, spoke about the impact on teachers of the newly imposed standards and tasks. Teachers are in accord in resisting the excessive emphasis on tests, test taking, and test preparation. There also is a consensus that the classrooms are shifting toward a curriculum rigidity which many educators feel is negative.

Burnie Dunlap, PhD, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce, emphasized the belief that a strong business climate requires the existence of a strong public school system. The Chamber is also a strong supporter of local control of school policies. There is concern

about the unintended consequences of the "Identified School" status for a school, which fails to meet one of the criteria set by NCLB. The designation unfairly applies the label of failure on the school and its students, when the cause of the designation may well reflect population mobility, poverty, or some other feature, which is beyond the control of the school.

Rick Pratt, Assistant Executive Director of the California School Boards Association, placed himself in the firing line of those seeking to bring about needed changes in NCLB. He stated that, so far, appeals to the Federal Education Department have been largely stonewalled, though he feels that the heat from nationwide forums like this one and from local legislators across the country is beginning to bring some movement toward getting a hearing in Washington. He stated that the answers to the most demanding problems in California schools are not to be found in NCLB. He listed five issues as being at the head of the list that need to be addressed in the law.

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**RICK PRATT,
Assistant Executive Director
California School Boards
Association**

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Orange County Board of Supervisors

THE CONTRACT

Is the new county employees contract a good deal or not? And for whom? That surely depends on where one sits. At the 8/24 BOS meeting the question was on the agenda and much discussed. Treasurer John Moorlach was opposed, and said the financial risks are too high, that the pension funds' investment return assumptions are unrealistic. A number of public speakers also voiced objections about the projected interest assumptions, said they were too high, challenged the cited savings, compared the plan to what teachers get and said it was too generous, and thought the older employees shouldn't be given the enhanced benefits they haven't paid for. A former council woman from Fullerton said her city is paying pension benefits from the general fund because investment projections her council was given turned out to be all wrong.

A well-chosen sample of county employees spoke in favor. Speaking for their fellows they said they were willing to exchange salary now for bigger pensions later and that they have agreed to forgo a general raise for 3 years and increase their contributions to the pension fund now; it was stressed that the negotiations had been in good faith, and that the county has to remain competitive in order to attract good employees.

Supervisors Wilson, Silva and Campbell agreed and voted yes; they feel it is a good deal because of the county's tight cash situation. Supervisors Smith and Norby said no. They wanted more information and didn't really accept the financial assumptions in the plan. The county employees who filled just about every seat in the available rooms were delighted with the yes vote. Also happy must be the current employees near retirement who will get the enhanced benefit even though they haven't paid for it, and since the retirement age has been lowered to 55, the expectation is that about 5% of them will retire next July.

How can the public know the truth of the matter? They really can't. Negotiations are conducted

in closed session, and assumptions about investment returns are judgment calls. As are actuarial numbers. As investment advisers ask, how risk adverse are you?

A couple of weeks later Mr. Campbell brought up the issue of how to handle the expected spike in the number of retirees next July when contract provisions go into effect. He wants to plan for it and asked the CEO for a report in 45 days as to how this will be done. Mr. Campbell had a number of suggestions for the CEO: surveys, start recruiting replacements now, consider not replacing

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people, how about contracting out? Mr. Norby quickly commented that 800 employees may retire and wanted to avoid employees staying on after retirement on a contract basis; no double dipping, he said. He objects to letting people retire at 55, "at the height of their productivity" and said it is their responsibility to train a successor.

And then they had a conversation about cell phones. It seems the county's costs for cell phones have spiked recently, so the CEO issued a set of rules for their proper use. The whole question alarmed the supervisors and Mr. Norby asked that the CEO look into the policy and that an audit was needed. The other supervisors also thought this was a good idea.

Why strain at the gnat of cell phone costs - 0.5% of discretionary spending according to the newspaper account - while approving an employee contract with the potential for high, unknown, and uncontrollable future costs? And once again, the home care workers are back in droves to speak to the board during public comment time. Apparently a law was passed during the past legislative session that could lead to a reduction in their hourly wage back to the minimum wage. This after a steady and patient campaign on their part to get a small raise last year.

Priorities, priorities.

BY TRISH HARRIGAN

LWV Observer, Board of Supervisors

A Cause For Celebration

THE UNITED NATIONS BIRTHDAY

On June 26, 1945, 51 war-weary nations led by the United States created the United Nations. The signed Charter of the U.N. was put into effect on October 24, 1945, which we now celebrate as U.N. Day.

Though the organization is less than perfect, its achievements are notable, varied and important. While the U.N. has worked for improvement in many different areas such as health, environment, refugees and peace keeping, I would like to emphasize the work of two programs: UNICEF and UNIFEM.

UNICEF, the children's emergency fund, has provided for the immunization of 80% of the world's children against deadly diseases. It also works to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and sees that care is provided for children and young people already infected. In addition UNICEF, along with governments and other partners, works extensively to en-

sure that every child completes a quality primary school education.

UNIFEM projects have supported innovative programs run by women in over 100 countries. Women now have access to new food production technologies and marketing opportunities. They have been helped to organize cooperatives, and have been provided training and credit.

At the U.N. Charter Conference in 1945, the League was one of 42 nongovernmental organizations invited by President Truman to serve as a consultant to the U.S. delegation. Since that time, the League has continued its presence at the United Nations through its U.N. Observer. The League of Women Voters of the United States supports a strong, effective United Nations and endorses the full and active participation of the United States in the United Nations system.

BY SYLVIA OELKER, MEMBER LWVNOC

CANDIDATE FORUMS FALL 2004

- ◆ La Habra City Council OCTOBER 7
La Habra City Hall 7PM
- ◆ Fullerton City Council OCTOBER 12
Fullerton City Hall 7PM
- ◆ Placentia City Treasurer OCTOBER 14
Bucks Community Hall 6:30 PM
City Council OCTOBER 14
Bucks Community Hall 7PM
- ◆ Buena Park City Council OCTOBER 19
Buena Park City Hall 7PM
- ◆ Yorba Linda City Council OCTOBER 18
YL Community Center Time TBA
- ◆ Fullerton Elementary School District AND
Joint Union High School OCTOBER 20
Fullerton Joint Union H.S. District Office
1051 W. Bastanchury Ave 7PM
- ◆ Cypress Elementary School OCTOBER 19
Time and Place TBA

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND—AT THE FORUM

(Continued from page 4)

1. Amend participation rates to reflect California law and ensure that the tested student pool is representative of the district's population.

2. Eliminate the "school choice" provision of NCLB.

3. Allow greater flexibility in assessing special education students.

4. Maintain high standards in a manner that recognizes and rewards the academic growth of students from year to year as they move toward proficiency. Continue to require that California show tangible improvement, especially with subgroups, but allow the state to use its own high standards to gauge school performance.

5. Amend the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement to reflect the reality at the local level and recognize California's own evolved credentialing system – emphasizing both testing and coursework completion.

BY CHUCK GREENING COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS:

YES ON PROPOSITION 59

GOVERNMENT OPEN TO THE PEOPLE

Support Proposition 59—Public Records, Open Meetings

NO ON PROPOSITION 69

FIGHT ATTACK ON PRIVACY RIGHTS

Oppose Proposition 69—DNA Samples. Collection.

Database. Funding.

YES ON PROPOSITION 72

SUPPORT CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE

Support Proposition 71—Health Care Coverage Requirements.

Referendum.

In our Voters Service role, we present unbiased, nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues on the ballot.

Criteria for Evaluating Ballot Propositions

- ◆ Who are the real sponsors and opponents of the measure? Investigate the names of groups with which you are not familiar.
- ◆ Does the measure deal with one issue which can easily be decided by a "yes" or "no"? Or is it a complex issue which should be thoroughly examined in the legislative arena?
- ◆ Is it written well? Are there conflicts in the measure that may require court resolution or interpretation? Is it "good government" or will it cause more problems than it will resolve?
- ◆ If the measure amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs in the Constitution. Amending the Constitution is cumbersome and costly and requires a vote of the people. Would a statute accomplish the same purpose?
- ◆ Does the measure create its own revenue source? Does it earmark, restrict, or obligate a specific percentage of General Fund revenues? Consider the effect on the overall flexibility of the budget.
- ◆ Examine the measure by its merits. During the campaign, be wary of distortion tactics and commercials that rely on image, but tell nothing of substance about the measure.

Courtesy of Margaret Craig, League of Women Voters Orange Coast

CALENDAR

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

LWVC Training Workshop
Saturday, October 9, 10:00AM
Sisters of Saint Joseph
480 S. Batavia, Orange
Call E. Fumanti for reservations.

LWVNOC Board Meeting
Wednesday, October 13,
3:30-5:30 PM
FJUHS District Offices
1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
Fullerton

LWVNOC Ex. Comm. Meeting
Wednesday, October 27, 11:00 AM
6207 E. Twin Peak Circle
Anaheim

Lunch with League
Thursday, October 28, 11:30 AM
Sizzler Restaurant
1401 North Harbor Blvd.
Fullerton Cost \$12
Reservations:Call 714-254-7440

Candidate Forums City Councils
October 7, La Habra
October 12, Fullerton
October 14, Placentia
October 18, Yorba Linda
October 19, Buena Park
See Page 6 for complete listing

Presentations on the State Ballot
Measures Pros and Cons
LWVNOC has scheduled
about twenty presentations in
North Orange County
Contact
Shirley Bloom 714-870-6593

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.

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

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

**Mail to the League of Women Voters
North Orange County
P.O. Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834
714-254-7440**

**Nonpartisan
Election Information**

www.smartvoter.org

- ◆ Polling place with map
- ◆ Personalized complete ballot—national, state local
- ◆ Most comprehensive candidate statements from local candidates
- ◆ Local ballot measures, state propositions
- ◆ Election returns

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Election Information
24 hours a day 7 days a week**

State-of-the-Art Citizenship
League of Women Voters California



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State Ballot Measures Pros and Cons
Enclosed

LUNCH WITH LEAGUE
OCTOBER 28TH

BALLOT MEASURES:
PROS AND CONS
SEE FRONT PAGE
FOR RESERVATIONS

Voter Editor

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mefumanti@adelphia.net