



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

VOTER

March 2006

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: March 23 Eminent Domain & Redevelopment

A city's ability to take property from a property owner under eminent domain and transfer it to another private party to raise tax revenue for the city is the timely topic of Lunch with League this month. Our two speakers, John Beaman, Brea City Council and Steven Greenhut, Senior Staff Writer for the Orange County Register are on opposite sides of this issue. John Beaman is very much in favor of using eminent domain for redevelopment and Steven Greenhut writes extensively on the abuses of government in this area. Each speaker will give an opening statement of his position. Then, there will be a Q & A session, during which the speakers will have an opportunity to question each other, as well as take questions from the audience.

Be sure to note the different location for the event. We will meet at the **Culinary Arts Institute**, 201 W. Orangethorp, Fullerton, 11:30AM-1:00PM. There will be a salad bar, three entrees, dessert bar, and beverage. The cost is \$12. **Reservations by March 21 please. Call the League phone 714-254-7440** or email lunchwleague@lwvnoc.org.

Open Government and Your Right To Know

TELL US YOUR STORY

Have you tried to get public records from your city? Was your city staff helpful? Are there black holes in your community's response to your requests? We are looking for first person accounts of seeking public information. Tell us the agency you were dealing with, and any other pertinent information, such as wait time for response to the request, fees required and so on. Tell us about your successes. Did you encounter any obstacles?

Open government is a right held by every American citizen whether the information is from a federal, state or local agency, or whether you are rich or poor. There should be no limits – other than obvious ones, that is those involving national security or privacy. Your personal story will help our League to better understand the level of governmental openness in our North Orange County cities. Contact us at 714-254-7440 or send an email to info@lwvnoc.org.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**NORTH ORANGE COUNTY**

PO Box 3073

Fullerton, Ca 92634

714-254-7440

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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 lwvnoc.org and click on "Join LWV" to become a League Member, or call 714-254-7440.

From Our President Looking Ahead

As usual, we have had a busy month in the LWVNOC. We had a successful "Happy Birthday League" Party at which we voted on various proposals for "program" at the LWVUS level. Members present reached general agreement that Civil Liberties should remain a high LWVUS priority and that a new study on immigration would be a good idea. These suggestions along with many others proposed by Leagues all over the country will be vigorously debated at the LWVUS National Convention to be held in Milwaukee June 10-14th. Another suggestion which is getting a lot of play with many Leagues is a proposal for changing the League's name. While we currently have tremendous name recognition, many League members feel that we should have a more inclusive name as befitting a modern 21st Century organization. This will surely be a matter for hot debate. Any member can attend National Convention and I urge you to consider going. If you are interested contact me or any other LWVNOC Board member. Conventions are an unforgettable experience.

March brings new challenges with our participation in "Sunshine Week" a nationwide effort to bring attention to the issue of openness in government and with our hosting of a debate on the contentious problem of "eminent domain" and its usage in redevelopment projects. We are also gearing up for Voter Service activities in May and hope that many of you will be able to help us in that arena. We'll be learning how to be more effective in Voter Service at a LWVC sponsored workshop on March 25th in Riverside County. You are invited to attend. Call or email if you are interested.

Eileen

714-441-1659, info@lwvnoc.org

ANOTHER MILESTONE

Our energy study, focusing on electricity, concluded February 18 after much reading and fretting over what was new vocabulary for a number of us. But what seemed like difficult consensus questions were finally resolved through traditional League give and take. Hats off to Eleanor Fumanti who guided us (seemingly effortlessly!) through research meetings and our ultimate consensus conclusions. Our final report will be forwarded to LWVC where the efforts of all the participating California Leagues will be tabulated. Results will form the basis for lobbying on energy bills in Sacramento.

BY EDITH BOCKIAN

LWVNOC NATURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Membership News

Read With League, March 14

It was great to see such an enthusiastic turnout for two recent membership activities, the February 4 League Birthday Party and the recent Read with League. Such events are wonderful opportunities to get acquainted with fellow Leaguers in an informal setting. Hope you can make it to the next **Read with League** on Tuesday, **March 14**, 7 PM at Burnie and Joan Cohen's house. The book we'll be discussing is *Don't Think of an Elephant*, an eye-opening look at the manipulations of politics.

LWVNOC is pleased to welcome six new members: Clara Black (Brea); Frannie Castillo (Fullerton); Camille Goulet (Placentia); Ginny Haussmann (Placentia); Farzana Molvi (Fullerton); and Leslie Sim (Fullerton). We also welcome two new one-year honorary members: Barry Gillman and Moira Brennan, our Lunch with League speakers for January and February. As of today, the NOC boasts 142 official members and 5 honorary members.

BY ARLINE BURMEIER
LWVNOC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

LWVNOC SHOWTIME

You Are Invited

To a League Showing of the
Academy Award Nominated Documentary

Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room

Sunday, March 12, 2006

3:30 PM

5500 Paseo del Lago W #1H

Laguna Woods, CA 92637

949-458-2218

Friends and family are welcome. We'll start the film at 4:00PM. It runs 110 minutes and is rated R. Please bring a snack to share. Drinks will be provided. Dick and Eleanor Fumanti will host the showing in the Leisure World recreation room of their building. Wanda Shaffer is providing the film and taking reservations.

Contact her at 714-525-6676 or wshaf6676@aol.com

Carpools available.

Development Committee Happenings

The LWVNOC Development Committee set three areas for emphasis for 2005-2006: Leadership, Image, and Financial Planning.

Issues for Leadership are to determine potential leaders for attending LWVC Leadership Summit and LWVUS National Convention and to support potential leaders to attend Riverside Workshop on innovative ways to implement Voters Service goals.

Issues for Image are to research and develop a plan for using banners in local cities, to encourage members to wear their name tags for all events, and to place ads in newspapers when needed to increase voter awareness.

Issues for Financial Planning are to develop a financial plan based on need and strategic plan objectives, to update the inventory of LWVNOC possessions, to analyze the technology support needed to meet LWVNOC goals, and to develop the 2006-2007 Budget.

If you are interested in working on the Developing Committee, please call Dr. Kay Bruce

714-921-1308

kay-bruce@sbcglobal.net.

CLEAN ENERGY for CALIFORNIA?

California continues to be a national leader in air quality management. The production of electrical energy to keep the state up and running has been a major source of air pollution for the state in the past. So the energy producers are being tasked to take measures to reduce the problem.

Barry Gilman, a specialist on alternative sources at Southern California Edison, provided an authoritative review of the current situation in a presentation to "Lunch with League" on January 26. An outstanding feature of the talk was the presentation of a promising new source of clean, renewable electricity to SCE, and to the world. You will be reading about Stirling Solar Electricity in the news some day soon.

SCE still obtains most of its electricity from conventional sources. In 2005, 45% came from natural gas generators, 20% from nuclear, 13% from coal and 3% from large hydroelectric. Alternative sources included 12% from geothermal, 4% from wind, 2% from biomass, and 1% from solar.

The renewable, low-emission sources are, in general, more expensive than the traditional sources. Nevertheless, they will continue to supply a growing proportion of our electrical energy because several of them will become less expensive with added development and quantity purchases, and they are mandated by law as a means of cutting "greenhouse gases" from our air. Also, in time the prices of the conventional sources will rise, as we have seen recently for natural gas.

Coal is the most troublesome source for SCE at this time. The largest coal-fired power plant, located in Arizona, is old and "dirty". This plant receives its fuel from Black Mesa in the Navajo Reservation in NE Arizona. It is mined, by mostly Navajo labor, crushed at the mine, mixed with water to create a slurry and piped to the

power plant. It is a complex process, and it uses lots of water from an area which is always water-short. But shutting this plant down, as must happen sometime, will cut out nearly half of the jobs in the Navajo Reservation. The decision will clearly be a politically loaded one.

Nuclear power is one of the least expensive and "cleanest" sources, but the public remains leery of safety problems. This remains true even though the record is much better than that for coal mining and transporting.

Among "alternative sources", geothermal is

currently the largest in California, due to the presence of geysers and hot springs. No large expansion is foreseen.

Solar energy comes in several types. The most familiar is the direct photo-voltaic arrays, such as you see on residential roof-

tops. The solar energy is converted directly to electricity and can be fed into the existing power grid. When the sun is out and household energy consumption is low, the electric meter runs backward, resulting in a reduction in the electric energy used for the month. If the solar generator produces more energy than is consumed, the owner will find a credit instead of a bill for the month! The solar source has the big advantage of being "on" at the same time as the demand on the system is greatest - during the working day.

A second type of solar system, called thermal solar, can be seen in the desert north of San Bernardino, at Kramer Junction. Here a two square mile array of large tubes lie in the sun, with reflectors to increase the heat. The tubes are full of an oil which can tolerate high temperatures. The oil at 700 degrees is pumped through water, which boils and creates steam to drive the generators. This is a rather efficient system, costing about 5 cents per kilowatt hour. The major drawback is the need for water in cooling towers to

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CALIFORNIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure means the basic building blocks, the public structures and facilities, that support our social structure. Normally, it is not the focus of major debate at the start of an election year, but this year it is at the top of both the Governor's and the Legislature's agendas. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has issued a report summarizing some of the main considerations on the subject. The state's capital facilities include everything from colleges to highways, dams to prisons and parks to offices. The state also funds local public infrastructure, usually requiring local matching funds. The LAO says that "most of the state's infrastructure investment was made in the 1950s through the 1970s, particularly in such areas as higher education, transportation, and water management." Spending dropped sharply in the 1970s, before resuming a steady rise after 1981. It has not, however, kept pace with our population increase or the needs of an expanding economy, nor has it adequately provided for the maintenance that might have kept facilities from deteriorating.

A 1999 law called for a comprehensive five-year plan for infrastructure to be submitted each January by the Governor. Such plans were produced in 2002 and 2003, but not since then. Now state agencies are updating information and a plan is expected soon. It was foreshadowed in the Governor's State of the State speech and press announcements, which called for multi-billion dollar capital expenditures for transportation, water storage, levees, schools, prisons and air quality. Legislative leaders are working on an \$11 billion infrastructure bond measure with a different list of projects. With any plan, a key question is how it would be funded. The 2003 plan proposed expenditures of \$54 billion over five years, about 54 percent from existing state and federal transportation funds, 36 percent from General Obligation (GO) bonds and lease-revenue bonds, and the remaining from direct

appropriations from the General Fund (GF) and other special funds. Governor Schwarzenegger has listed lease-revenue bonds, a water fee on households and businesses, higher port fees, tolls and other possible revenues as additional sources of funding. Of the Governor's \$223 billion ten-year infrastructure spending proposal, about \$101 billion would be from existing sources, \$68 billion from new GF-supported bonds, and \$53 billion from new funding sources. Although user fees or taxes such as the gas tax or water fees have been used to pay for some facilities, most infrastructure is financed

by bonds and repaid from the state GF. Facilities are expensive to construct, but last a long time and serve generations of taxpayers. Interest costs to repay the bonds can make the total cost nearly double the bond proceeds, but adjusting for inflation over the usual 30 year repayment span makes the price tag much less, e.g., \$1.25 million for each \$1 million borrowed. California now has about \$53 billion of GF debt outstanding, \$42 billion for infrastructure and another \$10.4 billion for the deficit financing bonds. We also have about \$30 billion of bonds authorized but not yet sold, although some of that is committed to projects not yet ready to build. Debt service costs will be about \$5.8 billion in 2006-07. The state's level of debt service is still within what is considered an acceptable range, but could become problematic if not carefully managed. California's credit rating has improved but is still the lowest of any state rated by the major credit rating services, and this increases our cost of borrowing. The major reason given is not our total outstanding debt, but the state's continuing inability to deal with its structural deficit. Infrastructure spending is an investment in California's future, and we have many areas of critical needs. The question, however, always comes down to how to weigh those needs against other needs that are competing for public dollars.



Gearing Up For the June Primary

The June 6 primary election is fast approaching. On the Board of Supervisors North Orange County Supervisor Chris Norby is seeking reelection and running against him will be Rose Espinoza, La Habra City Councilwoman. Declared candidates for Tom Wilson's term out Supervisor's seat include Laguna Niguel Councilwoman Cathryn De Young, former Assemblywoman Patricia Bates (R. Laguna Niguel) and former Laguna Niguel Councilman Eddie Rose. Orange County Treasurer John Moorlach has launched his Supervisor's campaign for Supervisor for Jim Silva's seat. In non-partisan races such as the Board of Supervisors, City Council etc, if a candidate gets more than 50% of the vote, that candidate is elected. If no candidate gets more than 50% then there is a run off between the two highest candidates in the November general election.

Sheriff Michael Corona is facing three challengers and Assessor, Auditor, Clerk Recorder, District Attorney, Public Administrator, O.C. Bd. of Education Superintendent are all up for reelection. Races

will also include judges and special district board members. Deadline to file candidacy papers is March 10. O.C. Voters will cast primary ballots in six congressional races; two races for state senate; nine for Assembly.

The Supreme Court took another step toward transforming state elections for judges from non-partisan, low-key elections into "big money" contests by letting stand a lower court ruling (Minnesota) that voids rules forbidding judicial candidates from personally soliciting money or from identifying themselves as Republicans or Democrats. The justices said the 1st Amendment gives judges a right to speak out on controversies even if their pronouncements undercut their appearance of impartiality. It will not necessarily affect California as the ruling by the 8th Circuit Court is not binding on the 9th Circuit. But it is possible that a judicial candidate might run a partisan campaign with the hope that state law would be overturned.

BY SHIRLEY BLOOM
LWVNOG VOTERS SERVICE DIRECTOR

Clean Energy

(Continued from page 4)

cool the exhaust steam from the boilers.

A third type of solar generator is called Stirling Solar and is a complete newcomer with a long history, just now reaching practicality. The story begins in Great Britain in the 18th Century when steam engines first came into general use. With coal as a source of heat, steam boilers provided the steam to drive pistons which could then drive factory machinery. These devices were dirty, noisy and dangerous. Boilers blew up with serious consequences.

A young Scottish minister lost several parishioners to such accidents, and he vowed to find a way to make the engines safer. Borrowing from some work done by his father, Robert Stirling developed a steam engine which was more efficient, quieter and safer. But the "Stirling Engine" did not

lend itself easily to the existing systems, and the engine languished in obscurity for 180 years. Recently, a new start-up company, Stirling Energy Systems, has developed a stationary Stirling Engine which can generate electricity at a competitive cost. It will use a field of 30-foot diameter reflectors which track the sun and heat the gas to drive the piston which, in turn, operates an electric generator. The gas which drives the piston is contained, so emissions are virtually zero.

SCE has entered into a first-ever contract with the company to provide, in stages, 1 Megawatt (a megawatt is a thousand kilowatts) by 2007; 50 Mw by 2009, and 500 Mw by 2025. This development, if it works out as expected, is especially significant because it represents a new competitor in a most important field - renewable, low-emission electric energy.

BY CHUCK GREENING, LWVNOG MEMBER

Healthy Children=Healthy Communities

Find Solutions to Support All Children

Mark your calendars and save the date, Thursday, May 4 at 6:00 p.m. at the Fullerton Library for this forum which LWVNOC is organizing with St. Jude Medical Center for an audience of leaders who may want to carry the message forward to their various groups. The O.C. School Nurses Association, the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce, the Fullerton Collaborative, and the Fullerton Joint Union High School District have all signed on as sponsors. A panel of experts in health, education, and finance will discuss the needs, costs, and values to a community of assuring that its children are healthy. Kathy Tedone, school nurse in Buena Park SD will open the forum with a discussion on the health needs of our students. Burnie Dunlap of St. Jude's will explain the impact on hospitals. Other speakers will cover the economic impacts and upcoming legislation in this area. League members should encourage leaders of area groups, churches, service clubs, etc. to attend the forum.

ENACT to Meet in Fullerton

Threats to Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Claire Schlotterbeck of Hills for Everyone and Hills and Open Space Education Coalition (HOSEC) will be the guest speaker when ENACT meets at the Fullerton Main Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton, on Saturday, March 18, at 10AM. Hills for Everyone and HOSEC are now trying to save the "missing middle", 8700 acres that will link the Whittier /Puente Hills with Chino State Park. Proposed development by Shell-Aera companies and City of Industry pose threats to the biodiversity and beauty of this area, and people in Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino have united to fight the projects. ENACT is the Environmental Action Committee formed by Leagues in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties to inform League members and coordinate action on matters covered by Natural Resources positions. If you missed Claire Schlotterbeck's presentation to Lunch with League last year, this gives you an opportunity to learn about a land grab story which should be of concern to all of us.

CALENDAR

Sunday March 12, 3:30PM **LWVNOC SHOWTIME**

Enron: The Smartest Guys
in the Room
Details, Page Three

Tuesday, March 14, 7:00PM

Read With League

Don't Think of an Elephant
Joan and Burnie Cohen's
1531 West Oak, Fullerton

Saturday, March 18, 10:AM

ENACT Meeting

Fullerton Library
353 W Commonwealth
Fullerton

Thursday, March 23, 11:30AM

Lunch With League

Eminent Domain & Redevelopment
Culinary Arts Institute
201 W. Orangethorpe
Fullerton

Reservations by March 21, please,
to League phone 714-254-7440 or
email: lunchwleague@lwnoc.org

Friday, March 24

Mom & Dad, I Can Go to College

School of Continuing Ed.
1830 West Romneya Drive
Anaheim 92801
714-921-1308
kay-bruce@sbcglobal.net

Tuesday March 28

LWVNOC Board Meeting

FJUHSO Noon-2PM
1051 W. Bastanchury Fullerton

Save the Date

Women's Healthy Heart Care

Co-sponsored by
AAUW and LWVNOC
April 8, 2006
Orangethorpe
United Methodist Church
2351 W. Orangethorpe, Fullerton

Voter Outreach

CONNECTING WITH YOUR COMMUNITIES

How can local groups reach and meet the civic and voter education needs of California's rapidly changing population? In time for the June 2006 Primary Election, you're invited to a

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS WORKSHOP ON OUTREACH

Saturday, March 25, 10AM—2PM

March Field Air Museum Theatre,

22550 Van Buren Blvd., Riverside, CA 92518, (951) 697-6600

Registration deadline is Tuesday, March 21.

FREE PARKING – LUNCH INCLUDED

Contact Eileen Olmsted

714-441-1659, info@lwvnoc.org



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***March Location for Lunch with League:
Culinary Arts Institute
201 W. Orangethorpe, Fullerton***

Current and past issues of
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