



League of Women Voters North Orange County

Summer 2009

VOTER

714-254-7440
P.O. Box 3073
Fullerton, CA 92834
www.lwnoc.org

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation 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.

HELLO SUMMERTIME

Put these League activities on your Summer Calendar

Orangewood Children's Home Tour and Lunch Thursday, July 9, 10:30 AM

Tour the Orangewood Children's Home and learn first hand about temporary services provided to neglected and abused Orange County children. Orangewood Children's Home is located at 401 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868. Park in the front parking lot and get a parking pass from the Reception staff. We will meet in the lobby, have a brief introduction and then walk the campus. The tour will last between 60 and 75 minutes. After the tour we will have lunch with the children in the Dining Hall. No cameras or cell phone are permitted on campus. Cost for lunch is \$3.00. To carpool, meet at 10:00 AM in Fullerton at the corner of Chapman and State College in the Office Depot/Thai restaurant area.

Orange County Water District Groundwater Replenishment System Friday, August 7, 10:00 AM

The Orange County Water District Ground Water Replenishment facility uses one of the world's most advanced water purification systems to purify and recycle waste water which is then used to replenish the groundwater basin. The system began operation in 2008 and has received wide recognition for its innovative process. Upon arrival for our tour, check in at Reception in the Administration Building Lobby. The tour will last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Plan on 45 minutes of walking. Shoes must be covered walking shoes (e.g. tennis shoes or boots). No sandals, flip-flops, open-toes, open-heeled or hi-heeled shoes. Pants and long sleeve shirts are recommended. Backpacks, bags, books, etc are not permitted on the tour.
Location: 18700 Ward St., Fountain Valley, CA. on the Southeast corner of Ellis Avenue and Ward St., in Fountain Valley. Please park in the designated visitor spots in front of the Administration Building.
Driving Directions: Southbound on the 405, exit Euclid and turn right from the off-ramp. Euclid turns into Ellis Avenue. Turn left onto Ward Street. OCWD is located on the left. Arrival at 10:00 AM..

Summer's End Patio Party at the Home of Ellen Ballard Sunday, August 30. 5:00 PM to ???

Relax with other League members, prospective members and friends at our end of summer patio party. Please bring an appetizer to share. Husbands, adult children, significant others, et al are invited to Ellen Ballard's, 1434 Richman Knoll, Fullerton, CA. fshermet@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

More Information: Contact Frann Shermet at fshermet@gmail.com or 714-220-1338.

North Orange County League of Women Voters Honored for Member Retention Work at Biennial Convention

Sacramento, CA - The League of Women Voters of North Orange County was recognized with the Member Retention award for outstanding work by the League of Women Voters California at its annual convention in Long Beach on May 15-17, 2009.

The League was recognized for their retention of 75% of the new members who joined their League in 2006-07, and their strong program welcoming new members and encouraging the active involvement of new and continuing members. For more information on LWV North Orange County visit <http://www.lwvnoc.org>.



Pictured above: LWVC Membership Director Bonnie Hamlin, Mary Fuhrman, President of LWV North Orange County and Arline Burgmeier of LWV North Orange County.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NORTH ORANGE COUNTY

OFFICERS

Kay Bruce & Wanda Shaffer
Co-Presidents
Arline Burgmeier, Vice President
Patti Chikahisa, Secretary
Marilyn Buchi, Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Jeanne Blum & Marge Imbler
Co-Voter Service
Diane Dantas & Frann Shermet
Co-Membership
Joan Cohen, Program
Bette Frazier, Lunch with League
Mary Fuhrman, Action and Advocacy
Sue Fisher, Natural Resources
Pearl Mann, Government
Marguerite Lyon & Lee Sjostrom
Co-Social Policy

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.

Become a League Member

Go online to lwvnoc.org
and click "Join LWV"
or call 714-254-7440.

LETTERS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Dear Leaguers,

July marks the transition from the LWVNOC leadership of President Mary Fuhrman to the leadership of Co-Presidents Kay Bruce and Wanda Shaffer. That's correct, it'll take two of us to try to carry on Mary's achievements! We are grateful that she has agreed to stay on the Executive Board to assist us. The many wonderful "veteran" members on our Board of Directors and the active behind the scenes members are also very appreciated. Together, yes, we can! Kay and I are energized with pride in League and promise to ensure two productive and meaningful years.

Please save Sept. 12, Saturday, on your calendar NOW. Our annual Kick Off will be chock full of interesting people, tasty foods and fun. Joan Cohen's committee will be sending more info later, but NOW is the time to carve that date out of your busy time.

Have a wonderful summer and I hope to see you Sept. 12.

Wanda Shaffer

I would like to add a note that this year is going to be filled with many local, state, and national challenges. The state budget, the health care crisis, water issues, redistricting, and the 2010 elections are just a few examples. The League will continue to work for informed voters who are making decisions about our democracy. We will be communicating with you by the Voter, by our lwvnoc.org website, email, the phones, and the many exciting events. Two of the standard events will be:

1) Read with League on the first Thursday and 2) Lunch with League in September, October, January, February, March, and April on the third Thursday of the months. Hope to see you at the Summertime Events listed in this Voter. We look forward to serving you as officers for the League of Women Voters of North Orange County.

Kay Bruce



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETINGS

BY WANDA SHAFFER, LWVNOG OBSERVER

JUNE 2, 2009

Your observer didn't make it to the meeting held at the Hall of Adm. In Santa Ana. However, I did watch it in my bathrobe and online in streaming video; you can do this too! Just type in *ocgov.com* and click on Clerk of the Board. Go from there. It starts at 9:30am.

Most of the meeting involved approving contracts but there was a great 15-minute presentation by OC Fire Chief Chip Prather and Asst. Chief McIntosh. (It was stated that Chief Prather is retiring.) You can view this excellent presentation by typing in *ocgov.com*, go to *Board Agenda and Minutes* on the left side of screen, click on the date, *June 2*, and choose "Minutes with Documents". Item #70 is the PowerPoint presentation of the Fire Dept.

"The After Action Report" was requested by the Board. The OC Fire Agency offered the following conclusions from the study:

1. There should be a quicker repopulation of the residents after the fires.
2. Radio communication needs improvement for firefighter safety, especially in the canyons.
3. Closer coordination of all groups involved in fighting the fires and enforcing the law is required.
4. More compressed air foam systems need to be available and used.
5. Develop a DVD and brochures for outreach with 14 high-risk communities. This will include town hall meetings, home safety assessments, and a program called, "Ready, Set, Go". This is anticipated to be a model nationwide.
6. Residents need to be aware of things they can do to protect their property: have a defensible space around the perimeter, build with noncombustible construction, use fire-resistant plants, get

rid of older vinyl windows (the frames melt and the glass falls out), turn off the air conditioners and attic fans, and screen all air vents.

After the fires, the OC Fire Agency used bulldozers for path repairs and they prepared for the recovery of burned areas before the winter storms.

Saturday, Nov. 15 featured two fires that eventually met. These fires resulted in 30,305 burned acres, 9,000 homes evacuated, and 381 homes damaged/destroyed.

Kudos were given to the Community Response Teams, the law and fire volunteers, the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. 6,000 phone calls were made and there were 1.4 million hits daily on the OCFA website.

The cost of these horrendous fires came to \$16 million, but with state grants and cost sharing with fire agencies from other jurisdictions, the final cost to OCFA was \$33,000. Our county has an agreement called "Mutual Aid", with Fire Chiefs sending resources irrespective of jurisdictions.

A supervisor asked about the OCFA stance on the controversies of volunteer reserves and residents staying in their homes. Chief Prather stated that Australia has a "Stay and Defend" policy but that the Aussies also leave when the weather conditions are not "normal" and when it is predicted ahead of time, they close the schools a day ahead of the prediction. He says that Australia is considering our "Ready, Set, Go" position.

The chief reiterated the desire to repopulate earlier, so the residents can check their homes more quickly. He is also forming an ad hoc committee to study the continuation of reserves and the need of 5-12 more compressed foam systems.

LWVC Urges Realistic, Balanced Approach to Budget

June 12, 2009

Janis R. Hirohama, President LWVC sent the following letter to the Honorable Darrell Steinberg, President pro Tempore, California State Senate. Similar letters were sent to Governor Schwarzenegger and other legislative leaders of both parties.)

Dear Senator Steinberg:

As you seek a solution to California's budget crisis, the League of Women Voters of California urges you to reject the idea of a "cuts-only" budget, especially one that decimates crucial programs. Instead, we advocate a balanced approach that includes new revenues along with targeted cuts to programs. We ask you to give priority to preserving the essential safety net for



those most in need, as the primary obligation of government is to protect the welfare and security of its people. The future well-being of our state depends on the care with which you mitigate the impact

of reductions on our most vulnerable residents and avoid changes that will permanently harm the long-term economic future of California.

We recognize that the size of the deficit to be bridged demands painful adjustments on all sides. The impact of the cuts already made in basic health and social services and education is staggering. Millions of the most vulnerable in our state—including children, the elderly, and the disabled—are now on the brink of destitution. We must give priority to rejecting the elimination of such basic assistance programs as CalWORKs and Healthy Families and avoiding further deep cuts in programs such as Medi-Cal, In-Home Supportive Services, and child welfare services. These cuts are unacceptable both for humanitarian reasons and because they will re-

sult in increased costs as state and local governments try to prevent immediate catastrophes and deal with worsened problems in the long term. To make draconian cuts while rejecting proposals for increased revenues would be both short-sighted and unconscionable.

It is unrealistic to rely on cuts alone to fill a budget deficit of this magnitude. The League of Women Voters supports revenues that are sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services and that ensure fair sharing of the tax burden. Recent polls have shown that a large majority of Californians want the budget crisis to be solved with a balance of cuts and new taxes, rather than by cuts alone. We urge you to consider revenue proposals such as those listed by the California Budget Project, California Tax Reform Association, the Legislative Analyst's Office, and other thoughtful observers.

In addition to new taxes or increases in tax rates, solutions include the repeal of corporate tax expenditures established in the September 2008 and February 2009 budgets. Those tax breaks benefit a relatively small number of corporations but worsen our budget problems. Eliminating them would mean several hundred million dollars of increased revenue for 2009-10 and some \$2.0-2.5 billion yearly for the long term. Looking forward, we should implement a systematic examination of tax expenditures to identify and preserve only those that actually accomplish commonly held goals.

We urge you to examine all possible alternatives to decimating programs and closing facilities, including fees that can be imposed by a simple majority vote and reductions in administrative costs. Even with increased revenues, we know that cuts must be made that will short-change our education, infrastructure, and environmental needs and affect the long-term health of our state economy. The state is already falling far short of the financial resources needed to educate our young people for the economy they will enter. Our capital improvement needs are outrunning the funds available to keep our infra-

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SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Court Issues "Vital Vindication" in Critical Election Law Case, Says League

Washington, DC

June 22, 2009

The U.S. Supreme Court today issued a decision in one of the biggest election law cases before the nation's highest court since *Bush v. Gore*. "The 8-1 opinion in the case *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number one (NAMUDN) v. Mukasey* represents a vital vindication for the voting rights of all citizens in this country," said national League President, Mary G. Wilson.

The case concerned the requirement in Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) that certain state and local governments, mostly in the South, must obtain permission, or "pre-clearance," from the Justice Department or a federal court before making changes that affect voting.

"Today, the Court left the critical elements of the VRA untouched, and allowed jurisdictions covered by Section 5—including the utility in this case—to be able to apply to "bail out" or get out from under the requirements of the VRA if they demonstrate a history of correct and legal action," said Wilson.

"The League is pleased with today's decision, which leaves the VRA as it was meant to be, and as our country needs it to be," Wilson stated. "The VRA remains our best tool to combat racial and ethnic discrimination in the voting process," she said.

"With this decision, the basic structure of the VRA is intact," concluded Wilson. "The Court recognized the importance of the bail-out provisions and extended them to all jurisdictions. With a strong majority opinion, the basic importance and relevance of the VRA has been vindicated."

The LWNOC OBSERVER CORPS UP AND RUNNING! JOIN US!

This Independence Day marks 43 years since the landmark Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was signed into law, yet Americans still believe that our government is secretive. FOIA established our right to access government records and to know what our government is doing, both its successes and failures. Exercising our right to know allows us to contribute to our government and hold government accountable. FOIA (and related state and local laws) are only as good as we demand that they be. For decades members of the League of Women Voters have acted as government watchdogs at the federal, state and local levels—observing government meetings, conducting document audits and empowering citizens, but more work needs to be done.

The key to a healthy, open government is public participation. On his first day in office, President Obama called for making the federal gov-

ernment more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. THIS FOIA ANNIVERSARY, EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW BY SEEKING RECORDS, ATTENDING A GOVERNMENT MEETING, OR ADDING YOUR VOICE TO THE WHITE HOUSE DISCUSSION.

Our League has an active Observer Corps doing this very thing! Many kudos to Patti Chikahisa, Kathy and George Dasney, Mary Fuhrman, Dolores and George Gibb, Amber Gould, Marge Imbler, Frann Shermet, Kathy Sidaris, and Anita Smiley for attending and reporting on their City Council meetings. We need volunteers from Placentia, Brea, and La Palma to complete the Corps. Training is offered before you start, you are not asked to speak, and you learn so much about your city.

Please call Wanda Shaffer for more details and then maybe offer to join us.

Wshaf6676@aol.com, 1-714-525-6676.

Voter to be Sent Electronically

Beginning in September, the *Voter* newsletter will be distributed electronically to all League members who have e-mail.

Every year this cost-cutting measure will save the League hundreds of dollars that is now spent on printing and postage expenses to mail hard copies of the newsletter to members.

If you have e-mail, please look for the *Voter* on your computer around the first of each month. If you prefer to read a paper version of the *Voter*, you can print it out on your home printer. If someone in your household is also a League member, please forward your *Voter* to him/her electronically.

Can You Help?

We are looking for donations to include in an opportunity drawing that will take place at the annual Kickoff Luncheon on Saturday, September 12.

Especially welcome will be donations of personal services. If you are you a professional-level expert at something, please consider donating a two-hour lesson or consultation in your field of expertise, such as golf, ethnic cooking, landscape design or home decorating.

If you own a business or know someone who does, could you—or your friend—donate a restaurant gift certificate, stationery items, movie passes or other attractive donations? Perhaps two guests could use your vacation home over a week-end, or you could take a few passengers for a sail on your boat.

Local merchants will also be asked to donate. For the drawing, donations will be arranged into approximately 25 packages that will be displayed at the luncheon. Lunch-goers will bid on their favorite packages with purchased tickets. The winner of each package will be determined by a drawing the lucky ticket.

This opportunity drawing is a major fund-raiser for our League. Proceeds will be used to finance League projects (such as civic education programs, election pros & cons presentations and local meet-the-candidate forums) and to pay for League operating expenses such as printing and postage.

If you have something to donate or have questions about the drawing, please contact

Patti Chikahisa at (714) 525-0023 / chiks2@pacbell.net or

Arline Burgmeier at

(714) 828-8624 / aburgmeier@sbcglobal.net.

CALENDAR

HELLO SUMMERTIME

Orangewood Children's Home

Thursday July 9, 10:30AM

401 The City Drive

Orange, 92869

Lunch with the Children

following the tour.

Info: Frann Shermet

714-220-1338

fshermet@gmail.com

Orange County Water District

Groundwater

Replenishment System

Friday, August 7, 10:00 AM

18700 Ward St.

Fountain Valley

Info: Frann Shermet

714-220-1338

fshermet@gmail.com

Summer's End Patio Party Home of Ellen Ballard

Sunday, August 30. 5:00 PM

1434 Richman Knoll

Fullerton

Info: Frann Shermet

714-220-1338

fshermet@gmail.com

Save the Date

Annual Kick Off Luncheon

Saturday September 12, 2009

11:30AM-2:00PM

Alta Vista Country Club

777 Alta Vista, Placentia

Vanishing Orange County

By Chris Epting

Cost \$25

RSVP: Bette Fraizer bhfh1951@aol.com

or 714-254-7440

Mail your check to

LWVNOG, PO Box 3073

Fullerton, CA 92834

by September 4



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LWW: JOIN US IN MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

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structure up to reasonable standards, and our natural resources are threatened. We must do everything possible to strengthen the investments needed to keep the California economy strong and competitive.

This difficult time has highlighted the need for a serious consideration of our budget process and finance system. We urge you to move forward from this budget situation to serious structural reform, including the elimination of the two-thirds vote requirements that paralyze fiscal decision-making and adoption of a fairer, more efficient, and more stable tax policy. Californians have a right to expect their leaders to take on the task of improving our dysfunctional system. They deserve no less.

Sincerely,
Janis R. Hirohama
President
California League of Women Voters

Save the Date

LWVNOC

**KICK OFF LUNCHEON
Saturday, September 12,
11:30-2:00**

"Vanishing Orange County"

By Chris Epting

Alta Vista Country Club
777 Alta Vista Placentia, CA

Cost \$25

RSVP: Bette Fraizer bfhf1951@aol.com
or 714-254-7440

Mail your check to
LWVNOC, PO Box 3073
Fullerton, CA 92834 by September 4