



League of Women Voters North Orange County

September 2009

VOTER

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

Saturday, September 12, 2009

LWVNOCKICKOFF LUNCHEON

Alta Vista Country Club, Placentia, 11:30AM

Vanishing Orange County by Chris Epting

Did you ever wonder why it's called Jam-boree Road? Did you know the great-grandson of Geronimo opened the 115-acre Buffalo Ranch in Newport with 70 buffalo? In 1970 the buffalo were shipped off to Catalina Island, but that's why you see the buffalo statue on MacArthur Blvd today. Did you know John Wayne Airport is thought to be the world's first commercial drag strip with races every Sunday from 1950-1951?

Our featured speaker, Chris Epting, recently quoted in the LA Times, is the author of 12 books about past events and sites in Orange County. His audio/visual presentation will include

photos from his private collection and from the Orange County Archives. His books will be available for purchase and gift giving.

Enjoy a gorgeous setting, good food and company, a very interesting speaker, valuable prizes in an opportunity drawing, and a chance to introduce friends to the League for 2009-2010.

Please RSVP by September 1. Menu: Chinese Chicken Salad or Vegetarian Plate, Dessert and Beverage. Send check for \$25 to LWVNOCK, PO Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834. Information: Joan Cohen at 714-525-0023 or at JFC72@roadrunner.com.

Thursday, September 24, 2009

Lunch with League

State of Our School Districts

With the budget cuts from Sacramento, Orange County schools are facing new challenges never experienced to this degree. What are these changes? How are these changes affecting our children? How will this affect our economy?

Minard Duncan will address these issues and more. He served 41 years in the Fullerton School District as a teacher at Commonwealth School and Ladera Vista Junior High, and as principal at Pacific Drive School, Rolling Hills School, and

Richman School. Upon retirement, he went to work part-time for California State University, Fullerton, where he supervises student teachers and teaches a seminar titled Problems and Procedures in Elementary Education.

Please plan to join us at 12:30PM on Thursday, September 24, SIZZLER Restaurant, 1401 N Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, 92835. Reservations by September 22. Cost \$12. Call Bette Frazier at 714-254-7440 or bfhf1951@aol.com.

League Visits Orangewood

The first summer outing for LWVNOC was an eye opening experience as we toured Orangewood Children's Home in the City of Orange. Members were delighted with the size and beauty of the facility and most impressed by Program Director Jaime Munoz who conducted the tour. The commitment and sensitivity of the staff (200 strong) was apparent and helped to reassure us of the safety and comfort of the children housed there.

We were shown the individual homes which contain large playrooms, kitchens and bedrooms. Children play at the many park like settings which include swimming pools, play equipment and constant supervision. School is held all year round and staff is on site 24/7.

At our lunch in the dining room, we were introduced to the head Chef and many of the children approached us with smiles and handshakes.

At present there is a need for clothing for teenage girls of all sizes. Please bring new or gently used suitable items to Lunch with League for donation to the facility.

BY FRANN SHERMET, LWVNOC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR



Top row: Kay Bruce, Carlene Maynard, Arline Burgmeier, George Dasney. Front row: Mary Fuhman, Susan Hand, Ginie Hulsey, Deane Cassidy, Joan Cohen, Kathy Dasney, Frann Shernet.

Member Stories

We would like to welcome several new members to LWVNOC: Janeane Dimpel from Buena Park, Mary Desiderio, Lee Ann Donaldson, Irene Patrick, C. Reiner, and Cheryl Snyder from Fullerton, Frances Rich and Georgia Stavrakes from Placentia and Thomasine Kalman from Yorba Linda.

Please let us know if there is any way we can help you get the most out of being a member.

DIANE DANTAS, JDDANTAS@EARTHLINK.NET
FRANN SHERMET, FSHERMET@GMAIL.COM

Lee Sjostrom had been retired from a teaching/counseling career for several years, when she investigated ways to avoid vegetating. A friend invited her to an AAUW meeting where she met League members, who thought she'd enjoy being involved in their activities. For Lee, a world traveler, fluent in French, avid reader and ready to donate her skills and abilities to the varied interests of the League, it was a perfect fit. As it often happens, there was an opening for secretary on the Board and Lee saw it as an opportunity to learn all about the League from the ground up. She has been an active leader and member for over ten years. Recently, she has retired from the Board, but will always continue to be an involved member. Thanks, Lee!!

BY CAROL BITTLE, LWVNOC DIRECTOR

Many sincere thanks to those who sent cards and notes, called or other wise gave their time to wish me well for a speedy recovery. I appreciate you efforts very much and I'm quite sure they are succeeding - slowly but succeeding. I always knew NOCLWV people were the greatest !

Lee Sjostrom

From Our President

Dear Leaguers,

Health Care Reform is the hottest issue on the horizon this fall. Perhaps it should be called Health Insurance Reform.

Our LWVUS support position for Health Care Reform as stated at www.lwv.org favors a plan which:

Guarantees health care for all U.S. residents including the choice of a quality, affordable public insurance plan.

Ensures that comparative data on treatments, benefits packages and medical outcomes are made publicly available so that individuals can make informed health decisions.

Reduces the costs of health care for individuals, businesses and communities. Cost containment measures must take place in the context of equitable distribution of services and overall reform.

At our recent California League of Women Voter's Convention in Long Beach, we passed a resolution to support the Single Payer Plan, but LWVUS Board supports smaller steps towards a government plan.

I hope you have an opportunity to see Bill Moyer's Journal on Friday nights at 9PM on KCET. While the issue is being debated in Congress, the program will feature speakers from both ends of the health care spectrum. If you miss a program, you can see parts of it at www.pbs.org/moyers/journal.

What can you as a Leaguer do to participate in this debate?

a. Be Informed: read listen, and state your own opinions. Write the President, your representatives, and your senators. You cannot represent the LWVNOC, but you can state your individual opinions. www.lwv.org will identify your representatives after you supply your zip code.

b. Go to the state and national League websites to know the latest developments

c. Watch Bill Moyer's Journal as a means to hear a journalist's opinion.

d. Be diligent. Stay the course as it is going to be a long, hard fight to change health care in the United States. Change is most effective starting at the grassroots level. That means each of us. This is more than just about Health Care. It is about culture, politics, and changing behaviors.

Attend Lunch with League on January 28, 2010. Don McCanne M.D. will speak on "A Prescription for Health Care."

I wish you well as you decide on your role in making changes in Health Care.

Sincerely,

Kay Bruce, RN, PhD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NORTH ORANGE COUNTY

OFFICERS

Kay Bruce & Wanda Shaffer
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Mary Fuhrman, Action and Advocacy

Sue Fisher, Natural Resources

Pearl Mann, Government

Marguerite Lyon -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 lwnoc.org
and click "Join LWV"
or call 714-254-7440.

LWVNOC Interviews Senator Lou Correa

A summary of the Senator's thoughts about the budget and ways to avoid budget problems in the future.



Senator Lou Correa
Senate District 34
includes the cities of
Anaheim, Buena Park,
Fullerton, Garden
Grove, Santa Ana,
Stanton and
Westminster.

On July 22, 2009, Arline Burgmeier, Mary Fuhrman and Pearl Mann interviewed State Senator Lou Correa, District 34, at his office on Broadway in Santa Ana. Our discussion focused on the financial crisis and the problems of balancing the budget because a vote was pending on the latest budget bill. Below is a summary of the Senator's thoughts about the bill and ways to avoid budget problems in the future.

The budget is being adjusted to the current economic environment and will have to be readjusted again in January or February and in June, given our declining state revenues. What is missing from tomorrow's vote is an economic stimulus package. We cannot tax our way out of this problem, nor can we cut our way out of this problem. We need to grow our economy out of this problem. We need to create jobs and thereby increase revenues to the state. California needs to increase its tax base because many people and many businesses are moving out of state. We need small business incentives as well.

Immediate implementation of some environmental programs has hurt state income and cost jobs. Because we rely too much on sales tax revenues which depend heavily on sales of big items like cars, our revenues are much lower in a declining economy.

The real problem is the way we finance the government in California. Last year the

state's economy grew .04%, but this is not reflected in state revenues. Our finances in past 30 years since Proposition 13 passed have been a patch work. Because of our progressive tax system, the rich, who make up 5% of our society, finance 70% of the state income taxes. If this 5% don't make money, then our economy crashes because they pay much less taxes. Taxing the wealthy at a disproportionate rate is not working. We must restructure how we finance government.

One answer may be to flatten the tax system, or flatten the tax and have more individuals pay something, as small as it may be, into the system. Another possible option would be to reduce the sales tax and to tax services which is estimated to raise revenues by \$20 billion.

It may not be necessary to change the 2/3 vote to pass the budget. California needs reform. Term limits has caused much of the problem in the legislature because legislators are now inexperienced and lack the institutional knowledge of those in the past. Term limits should be kept and extended to about 12 years in each house (or reduced from the current 14 total) to assure that deals that are made are enforced. The status quo needs to be changed. Too many special interest groups are vested in the current system. It takes a crisis to effect change. That crisis may be here now! Removing commercial property from the Proposition 12 exemption would not help. The raise in property taxes would trickle down to consumers from businesses, ultimately costing them more. We need broad based revenue sources to fund government.

Doing away with the initiative system to amend the state constitution would not solve some of the state's problems. The initiative

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETINGS

BY WANDA SHAFFER, LWVNOC OBSERVER

Since the Orange County Board of Supervisors (BOS) recently finalized their budget for the upcoming fiscal year, the June 16th meeting mostly involved accepting contracts. Thus many "suits" filled the audience and they left as soon as their specific item was addressed. Your faithful observer stayed 'til the end!

The following activities are offered for your information:

The BOS unanimously approved an "historic" pension plan that creates a new tier for employees and the possible option to choose their own plan. At least a \$10 million saving the first year and possibly million more thereafter. This two-tier plan requires legislative approval of Senate Bill 752, written by Sen. Lou Correa with cooperation of the County and OCEA, the employees' union. Under the plan, incoming employees as of March 2010, would have the choice of the older pension plan of 2.7% of the employee's 3 years of highest salary at age 55, or 1.62% at age 65, which includes a 401K style retirement account with up to 2% employer matching. Existing employees would also be given the chance to move down to the new tier. However, if the bill is not approved, then all new employees will come in under the reduced plan. SB752 has support among Democrats and Republicans. I believe the bill is in the Committee on Appropriations now.

The July 14th. Meeting

The BOS followed the recommendation of the Legislative Affairs Officer and opposed HR 2454, The American Clean Energy and Security Act, authored by Rep. Henry Waxman. This is a global warming energy bill that proposes a "cap and trade" system to control greenhouse gases. It orders major industrial sources of these gases to enter into a cap-and-trade program that requires a 17% cut in domestic emissions by 2020. It also orders utilities to supply 15% of their power sales from qualified renewable sources of electricity

by 2020. This system would cover electric utilities, gasoline and other fuels, etc.

The July 28th Meeting

Supervisor Moorlach proposed a resolution supporting Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to sell Orange County Fairgrounds only if it provides that the Fairgrounds shall only be sold to a local government agency or a local not-for-profit corporation. (I believe there are foundations already gathering dollars to buy it.)

The 2008-2009 OC Grand Jury reported the Public Administration/Public Guardian Office needed changes and close inspection. They investigated later in the year and felt that their recommendations were ignored and that matters had worsened, so they offered another report. (All Grand Jury reports are available to the public and can be found at ocgov.com) The BOS is required to respond and presented this response today. John Williams, the Public Administrator/Public Guardian Administrator, offered a rebuttal. He requested a changing of the response to "Pension Spiking" and suggested "further analyses needed." The BOS agreed. He stated he looked forward to working with the CEO on the GJ report. Williams also requested the BOS response of "agrees with partial findings" be changed to "requires further discussion".

Sheriff Hutchens presented her plans to drastically trim her budget for 2009-2010. This is especially necessary since Prop 72 sales tax revenue funds about 43% of the sheriff's \$460 million operating budget. This funding is steadily declining. It is expected to be \$12 million below projections for 2009. Her department was asked to cut \$28 million from its spending plan. The Sheriff chose to cut from the top, trying to save "on the street" personnel.

\$2.2 million will be saved by Sherrif Hutchens' 40% reduction of administrative

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Board of Supervisors Reports

(Continued from page 5)

staff. About 25 other employees will face lay offs, with 191 affected through demotions, shifting positions, reduced overtimes, etc. The coroner/pathology contract has been reduced. Hutchens still needs to cut \$60 million more from next year's budget. The Sheriff is in constant contact with the employee organizations. Other considerations are letting special investigators go, early inmate releases, furloughs, and possible jail closures. The women's jail, the most expensive, has already been closed saving \$6 million but the closing is considered temporary. The Sheriff reiterated more than once that she felt she could not operate this way for more than a year or two! There are plans to staff 35% of the jails with non-sworn and less expensive employees, but that will occur over 2 or 3 years. Sheriff Hutchens is negotiating with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to house federal inmates in the OC jails to help the budget. A program could be underway by January, bringing in \$9 million this fiscal year, Hutchens asked all employees considering retirement to state so now. She has also taken a 5% pay cut.

Supervisor Campbell also took a 5% cut and wished that all management in the county would follow suit. He thanked her for her brave and aggressive actions.

The August 4 Meeting

The OC Grand Jury report, "2008 General Election" accepted with a unanimous vote. The BOS highly praised the Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley for setting a model for CA. Supervisor Norby felt the need to discuss absentee voting and early voting at length.

The County Financial Officer, Kim, stated that the state has not reimbursed the \$4.5 million fee for the May election. He is expecting the county to be \$100 million short for 2010-2011.

The County Assessor, Gillory, stated that the county is down 1.2% on property taxes.

Supervisors Campbell and Bates had requested an internal audit of the OC Public Works after receiving numerous and irate complaints from constituents in Silverado Canyon, Modjeska, etc. Steve Danley, the Performance Audit Director, presented a very complete report on the lack of training for staff, whose assignments were moved around as the staff shrunk over the years. The dept. seemed more concerned with cost and fees than with a fair and prompt treatment of customers.

The BOS all expressed dismay. Bates ordered a subcommittee to check on progress and that a monthly status report be placed on the BOS agenda. "We need to set up a way to prevent bureaucracy."

Interview with Senator Correa

(Continued from page 4)

process is the most basic democratic way for the people to govern, but the process needs to be more responsive and effective for the people. We should prohibit out-of-state signature gatherers. People have the right and should know the cost and the source of funding for each initiative. Voters should also know if what they are voting for is constitutional. Before citizens vote on an initiative, the legislature or the courts could check the initiatives for constitutionality before they are placed on the ballot. The California Supreme

Court could check them for constitutionality. One question is, should all proposed initiatives be checked for constitutionality or just those that qualify for the ballot? Clearly, the public should know the cost per taxpayer of each proposed resolution if it should pass.

Requiring a larger percentage of the vote to amend the state constitution would not help. We may consider revising the California Constitution to achieve reform.

[Note: The budget bill passed, but Senator Correa did not vote in favor.]

BY PEARL MANN, LWVNOG GOVERNMENT DIRECTOR

Read with League, Fall 2009

The Read with League book discussion group meets on the first Thursday of each month from 1PM to 3PM in various members homes. It's best if you have read the book before we meet, but you're welcome to attend even if you haven't.

Thursday, October 1: *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals* by Jane Mayer

A timely book that examines the panic in the U.S. that followed 9/11 and how it led to decisions in the pursuit of terrorists around the world that some say have ignored the Constitution, violated American values, and hampered the pursuit of Al Qaeda.

Hosted by Frann Shermet, 9525 Normandy Way, Cypress
1-714-220-1338

Thursday, November 5: *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the Survival Skills Our Children Need—and What We Can Do About It* by Tony Wagner

The author finds a serious gap between the job skills that are needed in today's world with the education that schools are now offering. Closing that gap might require reinventing the education profession.

Hosted by Shirley Bloom, 2609 Cypress Point Dr. Fullerton
1-714 870-6593

Action Alerts

The League of Women Voters has two purposes...to educate and to advocate. As Action/Advocacy Director this year, I hope to raise the impact of our branch's influence on our state and national legislators when a vote on legislation is being considered. I receive **Action Alerts** from both LWVC and LWVUS when League needs help from members to inform their representatives on the League's stand for pending bills. It is very easy to send an email to your legislator using the steps in the Action Alert email.

The LWVNOC Executive Board has decided that I should forward Action Alerts to all members in hopes you will be inspired to communicate with legislators using the simple tools in the emails. If you do not want to be notified, please let me know at maryfuhrman@pacbell.net.

Please do remember that when you communicate with legislators and identify yourself as a League member, you must only express the League's position. If you have a different viewpoint, you certainly can express that as a private citizen.

CALENDAR

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

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 by September 1

bhfh1951@aol.com

or 714-254-7440

Mail your check to

LWVNOC, PO Box 3073

Fullerton, CA 92834

Constitution Day

September 17, 2009

Volunteer to help Deane Cassidy

distribute educational materials

to middle schools in

North Orange County

Deane Cassidy: 714-528-4295

Lunch with League

Thursday, September 24

12:30PM-2:00PM

State of Our School Districts

By Minard Duncan

Cost \$12. Choice of chicken, steak or
salad bar

SIZZLER Restaurant

1401 N Harbor Blvd. Fullerton 92835

Reservations by September 22

Call 714-254-7440 or

bhfh1951@aol.com.



**League of Women Voters
North Orange County
P.O. Box 3073
Fullerton, CA 92834**

LWW: JOIN US IN MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

Summer's End Patio Party

It's time to join with other League members at the home of Ellen Ballard for an evening of sharing and visiting. Bring an appetizer and please feel free to invite friends and potential members.

Home of Ellen Ballard, Sunday, August 30. 5:00 PM 1434 Richman Knoll, Fullerton

Info: Frann Shermet 714-220-1338 fshermet@gmail.com

Voter to be Sent Electronically

Beginning in September, the *Voter* newsletter will be distributed electronically to all League members who use 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.