



VOTER

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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.

Lunch with League Thursday March 25, 12:30PM

Diversity and Inclusion in Orange County

The mission of the Orange County Human Relations Commission is to foster mutual understanding among diverse residents and eliminate prejudice, intolerance and discrimination. Rusty Kennedy, Executive Director and CEO of the Orange County Human Relations Commission and Council will report on Orange County's progress in fulfilling the

Commission's goals when he speaks at Lunch with League.

Lunch is from 12:30-2:00PM at the SIZLER Restaurant, 1401 N Harbor Boulevard, Fullerton 92835. Cost is \$12. Choice of chicken, steak or salad bar.

Reservations by March 22. Contact 714-254-7440 or bfhf1951@aol.com.

Sunshine Week: March 14-20

Openness in Government

Sunshine Week, held the week of James Madison's birthday (March 16), is a nationwide effort to open up dialogue on the importance of transparency in government and freedom of information. Journalists, civic groups, libraries, schools and others interested in the public's right to know have banded together to help promote this non-partisan effort to enlighten and empower individuals to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger

The Sunshine Week initiative originated from the work of several newspapers, and it has grown, in large part, because of the media's continued support. Journalists around the country are encouraged to report on gov-

ernment transparency issues during this week.

The League of Women Voters and other members of the Sunshine Week coalition encourage citizens to play an active role in promoting transparency and freedom of information at all levels of government. Mary Fuhrman, LWVNOC Advocacy Director, is working with LWVNOC observers and local community representatives to develop a Sunshine Week project for each of the eight cities in our League area.

Look for more information about Sunshine Week events in the April Voter.



President's Message

BY JANIS R. HIROHAMA, PRESIDENT LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CALIFORNIA

This February marked the 90th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. How did the League of 1920 differ from our organization today? What was it like to be a member in those early days?

I unexpectedly found some answers when I came across my old copy of *Eleanor and Franklin*, Joseph P. Lash's biography



Eleanor Roosevelt votes in Hyde Park, NY in 1936.

of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, that I'd read so avidly in my teens. As I leafed through it, I saw the words "League of Women Voters" and took a closer look.

I knew Eleanor Roosevelt was an LWV member, but

I did not know what an active member she was. I found it striking that the League activities she took on, and the fulfillment she found in them, are as recognizable today as they were 90 years ago.

In 1920, Eleanor was 36 years old, married, a mother of five. She was, according to Lash, beginning to forge an identity that extended beyond her privileged upbringing and the role of supportive wife to a rising political star. "She wanted to be fully involved – with work, with people." So she joined the League of Women Voters.

After Eleanor joined, the chairman of the New York State League asked her to serve on the state board and chair the legislative committee. I had to laugh. Yes, even 90 years ago Leagues got hold of brand new members and immediately put

them on the board! Her first job was to identify bills of interest to the League. She worked with two other members whose "careful, documented workmanship shaped Eleanor's standards in her approach to public issues and helped her to do serious, sustained work." We do the same kind of careful bill tracking and legislative analysis today, and our work is still infused with those same high standards and the process of learning through mentoring.

In January 1921, Eleanor attended the state League convention as a delegate from Dutchess County. According to Lash, the Republican political machine was still smarting from the LWV's campaign against anti-suffrage Senator Wadsworth. Regulars of both parties thought the League needed to be put in its place. The new governor, Nathan Miller, a Republican, "outraged the convention with a denunciation of the League as a menace to American institutions because of its social-welfare program and lobbying activities." Although Republicans outnumbered Democrats 5 to 1 at the state convention, the League, led by Narcissa Vanderlip, a Republican, protested the governor's speech and reaffirmed "the right of women to work as a group outside the political party for political measures." I can clearly see that our "political, but not partisan" nature was apparent from the start; the League's lobbying activities discomfited the political establishment even then; and members voted their consciences, showing a fine disregard for party loyalties, just as they do now.

As Lash noted, although Eleanor had long followed politics as an observer, the League was her "baptism in politics."

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Ask Before You Sign Or Think Before You Ink

During this period of circulation of initiative petitions for the November election, voters should be encouraged to be cautious when asked to sign a petition.

Ask yourself these six questions to help determine whether or not to sign the initiative petition:

Is it complex? Some issues can be decided by a simple yes or no vote. More complex issues may be better handled by thorough examination and debate in a legislative arena.

Is it confusing? Some initiatives are not well written or contain conflicts that may require court resolution or interpretation.

Does it belong in the Constitution? If an initiative amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs there. Is it a fundamental law that should be protected from change? Correcting a constitutional amendment later is cumbersome and costly, and requires another vote of the people.

How will it be funded? Is it an "unfunded mandate" that would require the Legislature to take funds from other essen-

tial programs? Consider the effect on the overall flexibility of a government budget with already limited revenue. An initiative should generally create its own revenue source, and not earmark, restrict, or obligate a specific percentage of the General Fund revenues.

Who is behind it? Contributions and expenditure reports are available through Cal-Access, the automated lobbying and campaign contribution system sponsored by the California Secretary of State's office. To identify the real sponsors and opponents of a petition go to www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov to read the financial reports of campaign committees.

Before you sign, ask about who is circulating the petition. Many of the initiative campaigns use paid signature gatherers. The only requirement in California is that the petition itself have a disclaimer that it may be circulated by a paid signature gatherer. You can ask whether the person requesting your signature is paid, and if so, how much.

President's Message

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When the League decided to sponsor a bill requiring the political parties to give equal representation to men and women at all levels, it was her job to get the legislation drafted, find bipartisan support, and fight amendments to weaken it. Although speaking in public was agony for her, she persevered, giving reports to the state convention and speaking at local League meetings. As we know, she overcame her fears and became a noted public speaker. Today, in the same way, League members learn the political landscape and the workings of govern-

ment, and become adept at legislative analysis and lobbying. And, just as Eleanor did, we grow personally and professionally through our League work.

Eleanor was a local League delegate to the 1921 national convention in Cleveland. Twenty years later, as First Lady, she addressed the 1940 LWVUS convention and recalled the speech of Minnie Fisher Cunningham of Texas, which made her feel "that you had no right to be a slacker as a citizen, you had no right not to take an active part in what was happening to your country as a whole." Some 90 years later, the League of Women Voters still lives those ideals.

Orange County

Board of Supervisors Meetings

January 12, 2010

In August 2008, the Board of Supervisors established a working group tasked with developing a comprehensive plan of action: the Orange County Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The working group is comprised of a diverse group of community stakeholders including representatives from non-profits, faith-based organizations, city governments, county government, and businesses. The Board approved the County's draft Ten-Year-Plan to End Homelessness.

In other business, former state Senator Joe Dunn proposed a ballot initiative to require elected county officials to disclose interactions with paid advocates and to require lobbyists to register with the county. These regulations are already in place in Los Angeles and San Diego counties. Dunn called on the Supervisors to regulate themselves, thereby restoring the public's faith in government. The Supervisors said they would review the concept when time permits.

January 26, 2010

The board meeting was suffused with farewell spirit, since it was the last Supervisors' meeting before the departure of Chris Norby for the 72nd district assembly seat he won in November.

Superintendent Norby used his final meeting as an opportunity to reiterate key reforms he has sought. First, he has spent considerable effort on stopping county funding of the Harbor Patrol in Huntington Beach and Newport Beach Harbors. The County Sheriff's department now handles towing and necessary emergency operations in these harbors, at the cost of some \$6.9 million annually to the taxpayers. The money is taken from the Parks Department.

Norby asked, "Is there any legal mandate to fund these services at all?" Informal surveys have shown that virtually no other harbors offer county-funded or municipally-funded tow-

ing and salvage services. Norby believes that the money now used on these operations could be better applied to the county's many parks and recreational programs.

In a second point, Norby believes the creation of an independent Office of Performance Audit will be one of the lasting legacies of his years on the Board. Director Steve Danley serves directly under the Board to provide objective analyses on how to streamline County operations, without regard to turf protection. A third major issue for Chris Norby has been dealing with excessive county pensions, particularly in the corrections department. The Sheriff's Deputies' pension reform agreement will reach the Board for ratification the week following his departure. It represents a small step toward pension viability and a rare one agreed to by their union. The current 3% at 50 formula will be changed to 3% at 55 for new hires, who will also make up to a 5% contribution toward the fund.

In other business, the status of the fairgrounds was discussed. The Orange County Register's Op-ed page carried an article on Sunday suggesting that the high bid of \$56.5 million was too low. Nevertheless, Craig Development owns the fairgrounds, subject to state approval. The City of Costa Mesa can zone the property for fair uses, but this leaves some opportunity for more fairs and more events. Owners do need to get use permits which is helpful. Supervisor Campbell thinks a ballot initiative would give further protection to limiting usage to fairs and the like. The state still has to approve the sale, but it appears that this will happen.

Frank Kim gave a county financial summary:

California State Budget: \$82.9 B

California Deficit 19.9 B

\$137 M removed from OC to go to state.

Current sales tax revenue decline:

Revenue loss DA \$ 6 M

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United States Census 2010

Counting Every Person in the USA!

LWVNOC is an official partner with the Anaheim Complete Count Committee and attended the Census Bureau's Placentia Office Open House located at 600 S. Placentia Ave.

Which takes the least amount of time? Filling out your census form, making a hard-boiled egg, changing a tire or watching your favorite sitcom?

Answer: Filling out your census form. It is quick and easy to fill out. Just 10 minutes is all it takes to have your say in how over \$400 billion a year will be spent in our communities.

Your community's future will be affected for the next 10 years. Census data guides planning for new hospitals, schools, roads, public safety, etc.

Equally important, it decides how many Congressional seats CA receives in the U.S. House of Representatives and it affects our new redistricting for the next decade!

The U.S. Constitution requires a national census every 10 years. It is a count of everyone residing in the U.S. This includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, both citizens and non-citizens.

Information collected is used only for statistical purposes. The law forbids releasing any information that could identify you. All Census Bureau employees, including temporary employees, swear under oath that they will not disclose any information gathered by the agency. \$250,000 fines and even felony charges can be charged. Copies of the questionnaires cannot be used as evidence in a

court of law. This airtight law applies to the White House, the Supreme Court, the IRS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, police, welfare agencies—EVERYBODY!

When you get the 10 questions in the mail in mid-March it is critical that you fill it in and mail it back in the postage-paid envelope. If you do not do so, there will be a follow-up knock on your door! Addresses not responding are visited in person by a census worker beginning in late April through July.

The forms will be available in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese. You may request a form in one of the five non-English languages via toll-free numbers that will be available closer to April 1, Census Day. Language Assistance Guides will be available in 59 different languages to help people fill out the English version. You may also access large print and Braille guides and a language reference dictionary.

Students in college, living away from home on or off campus are counted as a resident of that college town. This is important for Fullerton college students to know so they will be counted for our area. Citizens of foreign countries living in the U.S. are counted in the residence where they live and sleep most of the time. People on vacation, in an RV, or on a business trip should be counted where they live and sleep most of the time.

You can access much more information online and can even view the Census Form's 10 questions by entering 2010census.gov.

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Revenue loss Sheriff \$24 M

Budget shortfall for 2010/2011

Revenue loss DA \$19 M

Revenue loss Sheriff \$59 M

Orange County is coping with a \$78 million reduction in 2011.

The district attorney summarized consequences of these shortfalls for his office. He has not filled six attorney positions and six senior investigative attorney positions. He gave up 17 positions last year. He is down 23 people now, and anticipates four or five more deletions, for over 30 lost positions.

BY CHRISTINE MOORE, LWV OBSERVER, COCA

Member Stories

Joan and Burnie Cohen



Joan and Burnie Cohen have been members of the League for 50 years—could this be a record?!! Joan joined the League in West Los Angeles. Later when they moved to Fullerton in 1956, they joined LWVNOG. Through the years they have been impressed with the members who represent such a cross section of backgrounds and disciplines and who are actively working to improve the quality of life for everyone. Their appreciation for the social issues supported by the League and the many opportunities for active involvement has kept them enthusiastic and committed members. Burnie served as treasurer of NOG and provided supervision for student elections at Cal State Fullerton and Joan served as president of NOG and twice as president ILO. Joan has served in many capacities representing the League. She served as president of Child Care and Development Planning Committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and has testified before the Board as an ILO member. She has also served LWVCA reading legislation and making recommendations and has appeared on KOCE as a League member debating term limits issues.

BY CAROL BITTLE, LWVNOG DIRECTOR

2010 Membership Rosters Available From Directors: Diane Dantas and Frann Shermet

Most of us have New Year's resolutions to slim down and be more eco-friendly. The LWVNOG Membership Co-Directors are trying to trim down and go-green by reducing the amount of paper we're using and trying to save the League some money to boot. Starting in 2010, we will no longer be printing the League roster in a hard-copy booklet form. The roster costs about \$1.50 per booklet to print and becomes obsolete almost immediately after printing as members continuously join throughout the year. On January 21st, the board voted to adopt a new LWVNOG brochure, which will list the board, directors, and calendar. This trimmer brochure is cheaper to print, as it is only one page, front and back, and will stay current longer since the board and directors usually only change one time per year. The brochures will be available at League events. Those members wishing to have a copy of the full roster can do so by contacting either Frann or Diane.

jddantas@earthlink.net, fshermet@gmail.com

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson testified at a congressional hearing in January, 2010 entitled, *Defining the Future of Campaign Finance in an age of Supreme Court Activism*. The hearing took place following the U.S. Supreme Court's tragic decision in the Citizens United v. FEC case. Her message was that lawmakers must pass legislation governing corporate and union spending quickly, in order for it to take effect for the 2010 elections. The League supports numerous concepts moving forward in this post-Citizens United context including enhanced disclosure.

President Wilson also made note of a new nationwide ABC News-Washington Post poll showing that the League is not alone in this fight. 80 percent of Americans of both parties oppose the Court's decision.

Vote with the League

June 2010 Ballot Measures

At its January meeting, the LWVC board of directors took the following positions on the measures that will appear on the June 8, 2010 ballot. As always, local Leagues may not take action on state measures on which the LWVC has not taken a stand, nor may they act contrary to any LWVC stand.

Proposition 13: Property Tax: New Construction Exclusion: Seismic Retrofitting. Although the LWVC generally supports regular, frequent reappraisals for property tax purposes, and this measure excludes certain construction from reappraisal, a case can be made for the public safety benefit of encouraging seismic retrofits. **Neutral**

Proposition 14: Elections: Open Primaries (Top-Two Candidate Open Primary Act). The LWVC has never studied political parties, nor how they select their candidates, and has no position on this subject. **No Position**

Proposition 15: Political Reform Act of 1974: California Fair Elections Act of 2008. The LWVC has long been a supporter of public financing and is co-chair of the campaign to pass Prop. 15. **Support**

Proposition 16: New Two-Thirds Vote Requirement for Local Public Electricity Providers. LWVC positions call for a simple majority vote on revenue and finance measures at both the state and local levels. **Oppose**

Proposition 17: Allows Auto Insurance Companies to Base Their Prices in Part on a Driver's History of Insurance Coverage. The LWVC has not studied, and therefore has no position on, insurance issues. **No Position**

The LWVC has not yet taken a position on any statewide initiative that may appear on the November 2010 ballot.

Voters FIRST Act: Redistricting

In November 2008, voters approved Proposition 11—the Voters FIRST Act. The Act authorizes the creation of the new 14-member Citizens Redistricting Commission. This commission will be responsible for drawing the district lines for the State Senate, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization. Thanks to the hard work of the State Auditor's Office and many organizations, including the League, **more than 20,000 Californians have applied to serve on the commission.**

This is a significant step toward redrawing the maps for legislative and Board of Equalization districts by an independent commission comprised of diverse, qualified citizens. The Applicant Review Panel met for the first public meeting on February 25, 2010. The final selection of commissioners will be made by the end of December 2010

CALENDAR

Read with League

Thursday, March 4
1:00-3:00PM

She's Out There

by Amy Sewell

Hosted by Gabriela Kolas
(714) 524-3962

Info: aburgmeier@sbcglobal.net

Lunch with League

Thursday, March 25
12:30PM-2:00PM

**Rusty Kennedy Exec. Director,
OC Human Relations Comm.**

Cost \$12

Choice of chicken, steak or
salad bar

SIZZLER Restaurant

1401 N Harbor Blvd.

Fullerton 92835

Reservations by March 23

Call 714-254-7440 or

bfhf1951@aol.com.

LWVNOG Board of Directors

Thursday, March 18

Noon-2:00PM

FJUHSO

1051 W. Bastanchury

Fullerton, 92635

*Note: Meetings of the Board of
Directors are open to the mem-
bership. Members are encouraged
to attend.*

Read with League

Thursday, April 1
1:00-3:00 PM

**The Nine: Inside the Secret
World of the Supreme Court**

by Jeffrey Tobin

Hosted by Arline Burgmeier

(714) 828-8624

aburgmeier@sbcglobal.net

March is Women's History Month

In celebration of Women's History Month 2010, the League of Women Voters commemorates the past achievements of women and highlights the successes of women today, making a difference from coast to coast. From the suffragists who founded our organization 90 years ago to the incredible women who work today to improve our communities and our country as elected officials and as volunteers, the League's women are making a profound civic impact.



Washington, DC 1930
League members celebrate the tenth anniversary of The League of Women Voters

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Current and past issues of
the Voter are available on

line and in color at:

www.lwvnoc.org

LWV: JOIN US IN MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK