

April 2004 Calendar

Monday & Tuesday
May 17 and 18
LWV LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
SACRAMENTO

Thursday
May 20
GLENDALE YWCA
LEGACY LUNCHEON
honoring the
Women of Heart and Achievement

Saturday
May 22
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
GLENDALE/BURBANK
ANNUAL MEETING
Castaway Restaurant
Speakers:
Sue Georgino
Redevelopment Director
City of Burbank
Jeff Hamilton
Planning Department
City of Glendale
See flyer on page 2

Saturday - Tuesday
June 12-15
LWVUS CONVENTION
Washington, D.C.

Saturday
July 24
POPOVERS IN PASADENA
Women's City Club
Pasadena

President's Message

Chris Carson President LWVG/B

“It took me 20 minutes to get from Alameda to Western on Glenoaks!

You can't drive down Brand anymore!
And Central is worse!

They call it Four Points. You can take 40 winks waiting for the light to change!

Five hundred thousand dollars for a one-bedroom condo?! Seven hundred thousand for a three-bedroom condo?!

Do we really need another mall?!

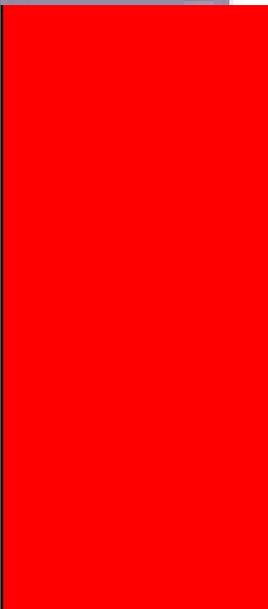
There are vacancies in the ones we have now.

Why can't Burbank have a Bee Line? And why can't the GotWheels and Bee Line stops be near each other?

What's going on with all the apartment conversions?

I heard a rumor that the Gold Line may be extended into Glendale and Burbank.”

WANT SOME ANSWERS? Get it straight from the source. Sue Georgino, Burbank's redevelopment director and Jeff Hamilton, from Glendale's planning department, will be speaking at our annual meeting. Invite your neighbors to come along.



League of Women Voters
Of Glendale/Burbank

65th ANNUAL MEETING

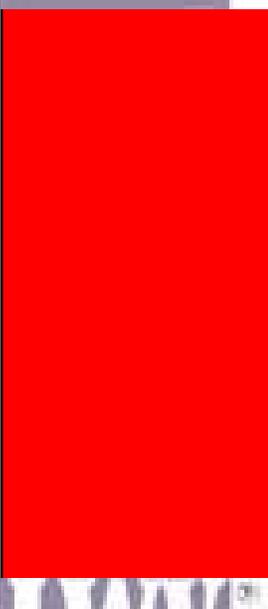
Saturday, May 22, 2004

Location: Castaway's Restaurant

1250 E. Harvard Road, Burbank

Registration & Coffee: 9:30am

Annual Meeting: 10:00am-2:00pm



Lunch Speakers: Sue Georgino,
Burbank Redevelopment Director;
Jeff Hamilton,
Glendale Planning Department

Cost: \$25, includes morning coffee, lunch (including a vegetarian option) and materials. If your registrations is received by May 10th, you will be eligible for a special drawing. Reservation must be received no later than May 16th.

RSVP, including checks payable to LWV/GB, to:
Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri. Burbank, 91504

Name(s)_____

Vegetarian Option: Yes_____

Glendale, Burbank and County News

Burbank Elections Change

ON APRIL 20TH, the Burbank City Council voted to adopt the all mail-in ballot system for municipal elections. This system was first used in September, 2001 for a special election on Measure A, the airport initiative. It was extremely successful, yielding a turnout of 34 percent, the highest for any Burbank local election. The City Clerk, Margarita Campos, requested that the Council

Our League
supported the
request for an all
mail-in ballot in
Burbank

allow the all mail-in ballot for the January 2005 municipal primary election. After discussion, Councilmember David Golonski moved to amend the request for the change to make the use of mail-in ballots permanent for all municipal elections. The Council voted 4-0 in support. The Council asked that the next 5 or 6 elections be closely monitored to determine whether or not the anticipated benefits would result

Our League supported the request for an all mail in ballot in January 2005 using LWVLAC position on voting systems "...Support of a voting system which meets the criteria of accuracy, efficiency, economy, and voter encouragement." Since Burbank's previous experience with this system was so successful in increasing voter turnout, we felt it was worth using the system in a regular municipal election to see if the increase in turnout would be repeated. Now that the Council has decided to make the change permanent, it will be very interesting to see if the long term trend supports the initial positive achievement.

Budget Time

WE NOTE THAT THE CITIES of Glendale and Burbank are currently undertaking their annual budget analysis. Good citizenship is more than just speaking at Council meetings or complaining to your neighbors. It involves thoughtful study and research of the entire governmental process. League members should be carefully monitoring the process. If you have concerns about spending priorities and possible program cuts, now is the time to ask questions and make your voice heard. If you believe that the League should make a statement about some budget issue, the Board will thoughtfully consider your request. Contact us with any questions or concerns.

Action on Health Care

AT THE 2003 LWVC convention delegate voted overwhelmingly to make advocacy Health Care Reform a top priority for the League in California. At both the 2003 and 2004 LWVLAC Annual Convention, delegates voted overwhelmingly to make advocacy for Health Care Reform a top priority for the County League since health care, or the lack of it, has such an enormous impact on the County budget and Children's Services.

Acting on this direction from the local Leagues, LWV Los Angeles County has been working very closely with LWV California to implement an advocacy effort for SB 921 (Kuehl). Last month our League helped to coordinate an extremely successful meeting with Assemblymember Frommer's staff to discuss the need for this bill. Representatives from AAUW, the Burbank Unified School District Classified Employees, the California Nurses Association, a small businesswoman, Burbank Temporary Aid Center, the ACLU and League shared their organizations' concerns about the current health care crisis. Read more about this issue in the article from Sheila Hoff, LWVLAC Health Care Director.

LWV California Ed Fund, Education Study Update

The following is the first in a series of articles on the LWV California Education Fund, Education Study. For further information contact LWVC/EF Program Director for Education, at LWVnatsugub@aol.com.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING IN CALIFORNIA

AT THE LAST LWVC State Convention, local League delegates voted for an update of our Education position, utilizing such resources as the Master Plan for Education report and recommendations and other materials. Before we can move into an analysis of these recommendations it is imperative that we all have a basic understand of the current education system. As school districts around California are currently in the process of developing their budgets for 2004-05, we thought it seemed appropriate to start with how our public schools are funded in California.

EdSource has developed several publications in this area that we will use to assist our study. All of these publications are available free on the EdSource website www.edsource.org. They include:

1) **Q&A: The Basics of California's School Finance System** (2 pages) August 2003 http://www.edsource.org/pub_qa_finance.cfm

This publication gives background on the different sources of revenue, how funding is determined and distributed to schools, and briefly introduces the question: Are we funding our schools adequately and fairly?

2) **Q&A: The School District Budget Process** (2 pages) August 2003 http://www.edsource.org/pub_qa_budget.cfm

This publication explains the budget process from who decides how the funds are spent in local school districts. It includes pressures school districts face when creating their budgets, and how the public can get information and get involved in the local process.

3) **How California Ranks: The state's expenditures for K-12 education** (4 pages) August 2003 http://www.edsource.org/pub_abs_ranks03.cfm

This publication compares how California ranks

on education funding, class size and teacher salaries when compared to other states.

The following two publications are also available online or in hard-copy and will add to the depth of your resource materials regarding public school finance in California.

2004-05 Budget Analysis (Legislative Analyst's Office) - Education

http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2004/education/education_anl04.pdf#page=37 - This document is the Education chapter of the much larger LAO's *Analysis of the 2004-05 Budget Bill*. Pages 37-57 describe and analyze the Governor's Consolidation Proposal and present alternative ideas.

School Finance and California's Master Plan for Education

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/R_601JSR.pdf - This document, published by the Public Policy Institute of California, was used by the Finance & Facilities Working Group for the *K-12 Final Report of the Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan*. It contains information on governance, adequacy, and possible funding options for state and local revenues.

The Education Study committee is also working on several other public education-related areas, including governance, school district organization, accountability, teaching, curriculum and the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

We encourage local Leagues to host forums using these materials as we bring them forward. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other organizations in your communities, such as your local PTA and other parent groups, your local school district, your business communities, and other individuals and organizations.

There are many ongoing discussions in Sacramento regarding changes in how we fund schools. It is important that we all have a good understanding of what we have now before exploring possible changes in education funding.

More California News

Who Pays Taxes?

APRIL 15 IS “TAX DAY,” the day when Californians pay their state income taxes. A new California Budget Project (CBP) fact sheet, “Who Pays Taxes in California,” looks at who pays taxes in California, who doesn’t, and how much Californians pay relative to residents of other states. Surprising findings include:

- Low-income Californians pay the largest share of their income in state and local taxes.
- Low- and moderate-income families with children pay little or no state income tax.
- 1,144 high-income taxpayers paid no 2001 personal income taxes. They were able to avoid paying taxes by claiming a number of state tax breaks.

The new fact sheet is available on the CBP web site at www.cbp.org

Health Care Update

SB 921: Passing Fundamental Health Care Reform May Take Years, But We Have to Start Now

CALIFORNIANS. KNOW our health care system is in crisis. Every day’s headlines bring striking news of its collapse. From abandoned hospitals to the buckling emergency system to workers fighting to defend health care coverage for themselves and their families, the issue of health care has raced to the top of people’s concerns. A single-payer system, with a public health trust fund acting as the single insurer, would save about \$14 billion in administrative costs, would reduce drug and equipment costs by about \$4 billion, and would reduce emergency room costs by about \$3 billion – more than enough to provide coverage to all Californians without spending a dollar more than we do now on health care was shown in a 2002 study of the single payer proposal. A similar study of the fiscal impact of SB 921 is underway and the results will be available in May. Senator Kuehl’s SB 921 would establish a single-payer system and has already passed the Senate.

But SB 921, as the Senator and the bill’s supporters are fully aware, will require a multi-year effort. Why, then, is it so important for us to support it now? First, the system is too near collapse to wait four years before we embark on a multi-year lobbying effort to address its fundamental unsoundness. Fighting for SB 921 and educating legislators and the public about our broken and unfair system will mean that we won’t be starting the conversation about fundamental reform in three to four years – we’ll be ready to implement it. Second, as more and more Californians are affected by our broken system, more are listening to a message of fundamental reform.

Already, one in five Californians does not have health insurance. One in two bankruptcies is related to medical bills. Our public system is disintegrating. Health insurance premiums have increased by double digits in each of the last three years, putting the squeeze on businesses, on labor, and on families.

In short, our system is self-destructing, and people are ready to engage in a dialogue about real reform. An ABC/Washington Post poll in October 2003 found that people prefer a system providing universal coverage to the current system of employer-based coverage by a 2-1 margin.

SB 921 passed the Senate last year, and this year advocates are organizing for a tough battle in the Assembly Health Committee, which could take place as early as April. The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 921. Here’s how individual League members can help.

Join the effort now – and help push SB 921 through the Assembly Health Committee this year! You can find everything you need to take the action at the SB 921 campaign web site at <http://www.sb921campaign.org>.

What you can do:

Contact your Assembly Member as soon as possible and ask them to vote Yes on SB 921. You can use arguments from the above text.

HEALTHCARE continued on page 7

Structural Budget Gap Begg for Reform



Policymakers are struggling to find ways to close California's persistent structural budget gap. A structural deficit exists when the state's taxes, fees and other revenue sources are insufficient to fund existing service levels adjusted for population growth and inflation.

The Legislative Analyst estimates the gap at \$15 billion and states that the spending cuts, deferrals, etc. in the Governor's proposed budget would not eliminate it but merely reduce it to \$5-7 billion per year. Only some combination of ongoing spending cuts or revenue increases can close a structural gap.

Where did the gap come from? One major element is the heavy dependence of California's budget on the personal income tax. Taxes on capital gains and stock options ballooned to \$17.6 billion in 2000-01 and then fell to \$6.2 billion in 2003-04.

Another large factor is the substantial tax cuts of the 1990s. Tax cuts enacted since 1998-99 alone have reduced annual state revenues by approximately \$5.6 billion.

The economic downturn and demographic factors have also played a part. Revenues have gone down, but population has gone up, especially in groups needing government services.

State income taxes are deductible on federal income tax forms. That means that when the rate in California was decreased to 9.3 percent, more income was taxed at the federal level. Restoring the 10 and 11 percent tax rates in California would add revenue for the needs within the state while reducing the amount of Californians' income going to the federal government. On average, the higher state taxes paid by top-bracket earners would be more than offset by recent federal tax cuts.

Sales tax revenue has declined over the years as a share of personal income because of a shift from consuming goods to purchasing services, and of increased Internet and mail-order sales. The California Budget Project estimates that if the same share of personal income went to taxable goods as in the late 1970s, revenues would be \$10.2 billion higher. Taxing some services could help fill the structural budget gap.

California is one of only three states that routinely require a 2/3 vote to pass the state budget. This empowers the minority disproportionately, whereas a majority vote requirement would actually place responsibility on legislators, making them take ownership of the budget and the process. Perhaps less negotiation about "pork barrel" budget items would take place.

The hidden budget—tax expenditures —also plays a part. Never comparing the choices within the budget to the "off budget" credits, exemptions, and deductions makes it difficult to make decisions about the revenues and programs most important to managing our state. And while raising taxes requires a 2/3 vote in the legislature, granting a tax break that lowers someone's taxes takes only a simple majority.

The \$15 billion bond to cover California's existing debt is giving the governor and legislature some breathing room. It has given them time to address structural impediments to a balanced budget. We need to consider what size budget is necessary when we have more people living longer, when there are more children in our schools and when we want our citizens to be healthy.



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Andrea Williams

Manager/Notary Public

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fax: 818.242.0525	fax: 919.244.4795
Mon-Fri 8:30-6:30	Open Mon-Sat.
Sat. 10-4 Sun. 12-4	

HEALTHCARE continued from page 5

Los Angeles County Assembly Members of the Assembly Health Committee who need to hear from you.

Assembly Member Dario Frommer, 43rd AD
916 3192043, Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Mark Ridley-Thomas, 48th
AD 916 319 2048, Sacramento, CA 95814

Stay informed. Sign up for Senator Kuehl's Health Care for All Californians Action Alert list at www.healthcareforall.org. You'll receive news, actions, and updates every month.

Sheila Hoff
L WVLAC, Health Care Director

CATHY SELLITTO

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Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All citizens of voting age are welcome.

YES! I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters as part of your voice for citizens and force for change. I enclose: (please check one or more of the following)

- \$50.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$70.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Name/Names _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

- I would like to receive my VOTER by email.
My email address is _____

Make check payable to League of Women Voters. Mail to Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank CA 91504.

Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.

The Voter

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The **League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

Member News

Welcome
new member
Adele Coy



A Smart Move:
Georganne Thomsen
has been appointed
arrangements director for the
League of Women Voters, Los
Angeles County, a board
position.



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League web sites:
LWV Glendale/Burbank
<http://www.gb.ca.lwvnet.org>

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