



League of Women Voters

Glendale/Burbank

President's Message

Chris Carson President LWVG/B

November 2003 Calendar

Wednesday
November 5
Board Meeting
Home of Connie Wilson

Saturday
November 15
Recycle America Day
Find out how you can
participate by visiting this link
[http://americarecyclesday.org/
main.html](http://americarecyclesday.org/main.html)

Saturday
November 15
**Proposition 13
Twenty Five Years After**
Visit our website at
[http://gb.lwvnet.org/
calendar.html](http://gb.lwvnet.org/calendar.html)

Thursday
November 27
THANKSGIVING DAY

Wednesday
December 3
BOARD MEETING

Thursday
December 11
ANNUAL LEAGUE WASSAIL BOWL
Home of Mary Lou Howard

THURSDAY
JANUARY 29
CHARTER REFORM IN GLENDALE
Guest Speaker
Eileen Givens, Chair

EVERYBODY KNOWS US as the "Candidates Forum ladies." Every time somebody runs for office, there we are with our Forums, giving voters the opportunity to ask questions that the candidates may or may not want to answer. And almost as many people know us as the "Election FAQ ladies." If you want to know about where you apply for an absentee ballot, what happened to your mother's sample ballot or where your precinct is—well, you ask the League ladies. THEY KNOW. What all those people take for granted is the fact that they can vote, even if they don't bother to. They just assume that the information will get out, the precinct workers will be trained, the polling place will be there, the vote will get counted. Nobody knows how it all happens, it just does.

What few people know is the important "behind the scenes" role the League plays in all of this. League members sit on the Community Voter Outreach Committee formed by the County Registrar. Their purpose is to reach out to all segments of the community and get people to vote. They devise programs to increase voter participation in the ethnic and linguistic communities. They work to increase access to the polls for the handicapped community. They help develop projects to involve young people in the voting process. While the rest of us go about our daily lives, they fight morning and

evening rush times to meet in Norwalk and do their work. We may never "see" the results of their labors, but a dramatic increase in the number of handicapped accessible polling places, the student poll worker and County employee poll worker programs are just three of their successes.

Now League is involved in a nationwide effort to implement the Help America Vote Act. The federal law has been passed and states are working to implement it. League members throughout the nation are serving on HAVA implementation committees at both state and local levels. Their job is to make sure that the act is fairly implemented and not used to create barriers to voting. They don't represent any one group. Their unique role is to speak for the Average Voter—all of us. They wrestle with issues like ID requirements, unified data bases, increased poll worker training, new voting systems. Not exactly the most exciting way to spend a day you might say? Maybe not; but somebody needs to make sure that the law is implemented for the good of the whole community, not particular segments of it. The right to vote is central to our democracy. The League is there, doing the detail work, so that all of us can go to the polls, vote with the minimum of fuss and feel confident that those votes will be fairly counted. We do it because we care about America.

California LWV Honored for SmartVoter Website

The LWVC is proud to be one of 25 Tech Museum Laureates for 2003. Specifically honored for its election website smartvoter.org, the League is one of five Laureates in the area of Equality.

The Tech Awards were inspired in part by the American Council/United Nations University's State of the Future report, and the United Nations is a partner in the award process.

Inaugurated in 2001, the Tech Museum Awards honor those who use technology to address challenges facing humanity in the areas of Education, Equality, Environment, Economic Development and Health.

For 2003, an international panel of judges selected 25 Laureates from more than 500 nominations from 70 countries. Five winners, one Laureate from each of the five categories, will share \$250,000.

The final winners will be announced on October 15 in San Jose at a gala dinner presented by Applied Materials, Inc.

Trudell Len, *Project Director,
Smart Voter and Guide to Government*

More League Lingo

COUNCIL - A biennial meeting of LWVC, LWVUS held between biennial conventions and attended by a small number of delegates (primarily League presidents or a representative). Council adopts a budget and provides delegates an opportunity to exchange ideas in a less formal setting than convention. In an emergency, council can adopt a study as provided in the bylaws.

COUNTY (LWV/LAC) - League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County.

DISCUSSION LEADER (DL) - The person who guides the deliberations at a League meeting. Usually a person trained to encourage maximum participation and exchange of ideas.

DUES - The annual fee required for membership in the League. The dues amount is set by each local League. (See Per Member Payment (PMP)).

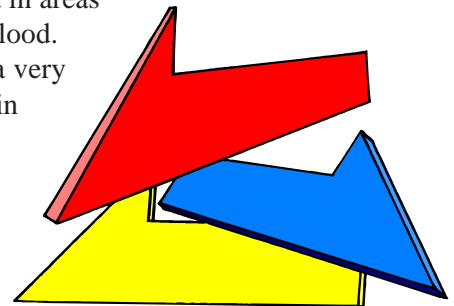
Natural Resources Notes

CLEAN AIR: LWVUS has identified clean air and the maintenance of the Clean Air Act as a second tier priority for action. A "Clean Air Grassroots Advocacy Kit" was sent to our local League. If you are interested, contact Chris Carson to review the Kit and to plan strategies for action. Alternatively, you can find additional information about clean air and the Clean Air Act at <http://interactive.lwv.org/Issues/IssuesList.cfm?c=75>. You can also find information about different strategies or action at <http://interactive.lwv.org/Issues/Issues.cfm?ID=673&c=75>

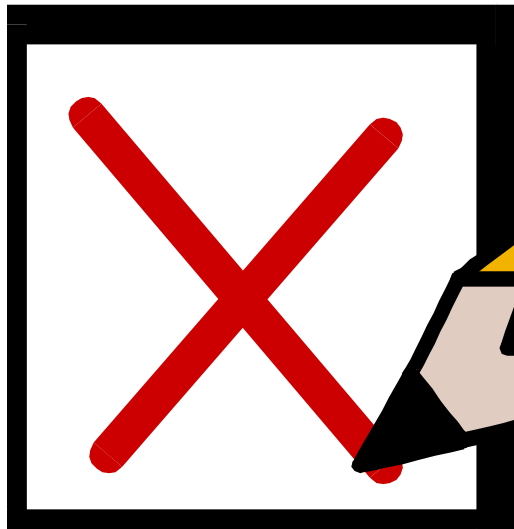
The Bush administration's "Clean Skies" proposal would weaken the Clean Air Act substantially and it is important that we all take action and write letters or phone our congressperson and our two California senators. You can use LWVUS's "Legislative Act on Center" found at the second URL above. You can also use the LWVUS site to alert family and friends about the urgency of this issue and encourage them to write letters also.

FIRES: We have all watched with horror the enormous destruction caused by the fires that began around November 23. Different approaches to land use planning that emphasized density and redevelopment in much less suburban sprawl and fewer homes built in areas prone to fire and flood. Steve Lopez has a very interesting article in the Los Angeles *Times* (Oct 28, 2003) in which he develops this argument at some length.

Perhaps these fires will serve as a wakeup call to policy makers that we need to rethink our development strategies. You can find Lopez' article at <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez28oct28,1,4352963.column?coll=la-headlines-california>



Budget Accountability Act



Qualifies for March Ballot

SACRAMENTO - Today Californians for Budget Accountability announced that the Secretary of State's office certified the Budget Accountability Act for the March 2004 ballot. The coalition submitted one million signatures in only 60 days to qualify the initiative, with one in five coming from volunteers.

"We are thrilled that the Budget Accountability Act has officially qualified for the March ballot and are kicking the campaign into high gear to educate voters across the state about this initiative," said Jacqueline Jacobberger, President of the League of Women Voters of California, one of the many of groups backing the initiative. "Clearly the million signatures we were able to gather for this initiative show that voters are tired of business as usual and desire real reform and accountability."

The Budget Accountability Act is a comprehensive reform package to fix the state's budget process, end the partisan games and hold legislators accountable for passing a responsible budget on time.

"This initiative is moving forward full-steam ahead. Not only has the Budget Accountability Act officially qualified for the ballot, the coalition of concerned citi-

zens who want change in Sacramento continues to grow everyday," said Anthony Wright, Executive Director of Health Access.

In addition to many individuals, hundreds of organizations are backing the Budget Accountability Act, including the AARP, PORAC, the California Professional Firefighters, the California State PTA, the Latino Issues Forum, the Sierra Club and California Church IMPACT, to name a few.

The Budget Accountability Act withholds the Governor's and legislators' pay when they don't pass a budget on time and forces them to stay in session and complete their work on the budget until they do. It reduces the vote threshold for legislators to pass a budget from two-thirds to 55%. Only two other states routinely require a two-thirds vote to pass a budget: Rhode Island and Arkansas.

It will keep voters more informed of how the state spends its funds in the voter pamphlet and on an easy-to-use web site, hold elected officials accountable for their actions, restrain partisan extremes, ease budget gridlock, and require a real "rainy day" fund to help balance the budget in hard times.



From the LWV California VOTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During the campaign for the recall election, a gubernatorial candidate publicly complained that the League of Women Voters excluded him from its debates. Many of you emailed me to express your concerns. Although I tried to respond individually to each of you, I realize that there must be others who question the League's stance.

For the recall election we had 135 certified candidates on the ballot—candidates from all seven political parties recognized by the Secretary of State, and dozens of candidates with no party affiliation. To be fair to all the candidates, the criteria for the debates had to be objective and to ensure that televised forums did not include 135 candidates.

Whenever there are multiple candidates for an elected office, it is necessary to set some quantifiable and impartial criteria for deciding who will be included in a forum. For state-wide contests, the League usually uses a percentage of support indicated in one or more respected polls with a cutoff date as close to the event as is technically possible.

For this election the percentage was set significantly lower than usual to take into account the more widely divided support among the large list. The rules for each forum were set up in collaboration with the other partners in the events, and the candidates received letters in advance advising them of the criteria for inclusion. Once the criteria have been agreed upon and sent to all the candidates, it is unfair to the other candidates to change the rules because we would like to see a particular candidate or candidates included.

League members take pride in our long and respected history as a nonpartisan voter education organization. We do not arbitrarily include or exclude any candidate based on party affiliation or lack thereof. We are committed to educating voters as fully as possible about candidates. Every candidate was invited to post information on our Smart Voter web site, and the short list of candidates listed in the supplementary material for the *Easy Voter Guide*, in which the League is a

partner, included the candidate who was dissatisfied with our policy.

This was a historic special election. In it the League members worked hard to continue the mission we started more than 80 years ago—strengthening democracy by acting as an unbiased resource that both candidates and voters can rely on.

Jacqueline Jacobberger, *President*
The League of Women Voters of California

ACTION REPORT

Budget Accountability Act: Thank you to all the League members who gathered signatures for this proposed initiative to change the vote requirement for adopting a state budget from two-thirds to 55%. A remarkable twenty percent of the 1.4 million signatures were gathered by volunteers. We will soon know if the measure qualifies for the March 2004 ballot. EDITOR'S NOTE: It has. See page 3.

Community College System: LWVC sent a letter in support of open access to the Community College Board of Governors' special session on access on September 9. LWVC also wrote asking the Assembly Committee on Higher Education to support sufficient resources for the colleges to fulfill their over-all mission and ensure access for all Californians to a quality higher education.

Health Care: LWVC supports both SB 2 (Burton) and SB 921 (Kuehl). We were active during the final steps toward passage as changes were made to SB 2, a bill that requires employers to provide health benefits. We also took part in talks about the universal health care bill SB 921, a two-year bill that will continue to be debated in 2004.

Water: LWVC wrote to the US. House Subcommittee on Water and Power for changes to HR 2828. The changes would affect the CALFED Bay-Delta Program whose purpose is to restore the ecological health of Central Valley Rivers and the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary.

Marion Taylor, *Legislation Director*

California VOTER continued on page 5

STATE WATER PLAN

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will soon begin to publish its required five-year update to the California Water Plan. Polly Smith, LWVC Off-board Program Director for Water and Agriculture, and Jack Sullivan LWVC National Resources Director, have contributed to the update as members of the Water Plan Advisory Committee (AC).

The AC consists of about seventy members including representatives of agriculture, urban water districts, businesses, environmentalists, Native Americans, and environmental justice advocates. Since January of 2001, the AC has met about twenty-five times. In addition, hundreds of workgroup and caucus meetings have fed into the main AC.

Smith and Sullivan have attended almost all of the AC meetings plus many of the workgroup meetings. Both Smith and Sullivan participate in the Environmental Caucus, which feeds into the ecology and environmental parts of the plan. In addition, Smith and Sullivan have submitted written comments on various draft chapters that DWR staff has produced, and Sullivan has co-authored a short paper submitted to the DWR on environmental justice and water.

DWR will issue a public comment draft of the first of four volumes by December 31 2003. After public comment, the volume will be edited to reflect the nature of the comments. Smith and Sullivan will likely be involved in that rewrite and in the development of the remaining three volumes.

Jack Sullivan
Natural Resources Director LWVU

ED FUND REACHES OUT— To Venezuela

Mony Flores-Bauer of the League of Women Voters of Oakland recently represented the League of Women Voters in a one-hour video interview on California's recall election. The Venezuelan government requested the interview because of the

growing tension around Venezuela's democratically elected President Hugo Chavez and a referendum process that is underway

When, for the interview, the U.S. State Department needed a Spanish-speaking expert to discuss how to educate and involve voters, the Department—naturally—thought of the League. Chon Gutierrez, Deputy Secretary of State for Operations in Sacramento, provided legal and constitutional expertise.

In her opening statement Flores-Bauer gave an overview of the League's history and mission. Following the opening statements, an audience of 40 to 50 representatives from Venezuela's Congress and their seventeen political parties, journalists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) asked wide-ranging questions. Representatives from women's NGOs were particularly interested in whether women were intimidated from voting and how the League helps with civic empowerment.

In the course of the interview, Flores-Bauer referred to the *Easy Voter Guide, Voting is Easy as 1-2-3*, our "Running and Winning" curriculum, and the LWVUS publication *Guide to the Presidential Election* to illustrate the range of previous and current voters service projects.

Flores-Bauer said, "I sensed an interest and appreciation for the role of the League in the U.S. [In Venezuela] they have NGOs, but not with the same history and unique ability to cross into political and government sectors as a respected voter education source." She felt it was especially important that we were able to present a Spanish-speaking voice from the civic participation arena in California and that we were able to demonstrate how, despite all the hoopla of this special election, the work and impact of the League goes on year-round.

Many thanks to Mony Flores-Bauer for taking League's mission to Venezuelal

Robbie Davis
Education Fund Chair

Tax Shift Funds State Debt



THE IRRESISTIBLE FORCE of California's budget crisis met the immovable object of partisan political differences in Sacramento this summer. One result of the wreckage is an unusual \$10.7 billion debt financing scheme in the 2003-2004 state budget. It has features that have been advocated for both fiscal and land use reform; the state will market bonds it says are not really bonds; and the maneuver has already been challenged in court.

Democratic legislators' distaste for program cuts ran up against their Republican counterparts' refusal to accept tax increases until an increasingly frustrated and angry Legislature agreed that the state would issue \$10.7 billion in deficit retirement bonds. The bonds would be repaid by a three-way shift of existing taxes that some call the "triple flip" and others have called a "shell game."

The state would market the bonds to investors and deposit the money in the General Fund. Wall Street, which would be providing the financing, wanted a reliable source of dedicated funds for repayment. So to repay the bond holders, 1/2 cent of the sales tax now going to local governments would be redefined as a "new" state tax. An equal amount of property tax money would shift from K-14 schools to cities and counties, and finally state General Fund money would shift to reimburse schools.

State law requires bond measures to be approved by the voters and to be used only for a "single object or work," such as a dam or a building. Some state attorneys have concluded that paying off debts for multiple purposes with bonds might not pass judicial scrutiny. The Pacific Legal Foundation has in fact filed a suit challenging this move, and was encouraged by a recent ruling against a \$2 billion bond issue the state hopes to sell to cover state pension funds.

Ordinary bond borrowing is repaid through a continuing appropriation which is not reapproved by the Legislature each year. This measure will need an annual legislative okay, which future Legislatures are expected to give because otherwise the consequences to the state's credit rating would be unacceptable.

A lot of fingers are being crossed in Sacramento about how this will work, because of the novelty and complexity of the legal questions. Even if this Legislature is prepared to stick to the deal it cannot be guaranteed that future Legislatures will do so. Local government representatives, such as the League of California Cities, are understandably nervous that the promised pea may not continue to be there when they pick up their shell. The two parts of the shift designed to keep local government and school revenues constant are not dedicated funds and local government has no protection like Proposition 98

This bond money only covers the funding gap in this year's budget. If the two parties have no better luck next year in agreeing on further spending cuts or new revenues, there will be another very big budget gap next year, and it is unlikely that the state will be able to continue borrowing at the necessary level to fill the gap.

The idea of swapping local sales tax money for property tax money has been a regular feature of various calls for tax reform. Local property tax money is a more stable source of funding, and tends to increase more over time, than sales tax funds. Moving away from dependence on sales taxes has also been advocated as a departure from the "fiscalization of land use" in which local jurisdictions compete for those projects expected to bring in the most sales tax dollars, whether they make land use sense or not. Some insiders believe this piece of the tax swap might stay in place after the bond holders have been repaid.

Any governor and future legislators will still have to face the same hard fiscal and political facts that brought us to this strange exercise in budget management and will have to deal with a voting public that apparently believes it can have government services without the inconvenience of paying for them.

Issues for Emphasis: A Status Report

Other than action, here is what is happening with League of Women Voters of California's five Issues for Emphasis.

State And Local Finances: Education consists of suggestions for local programs and camera-ready material for use in local VOTERS. The material is distributed in UPDATES.

Health Care: To facilitate statewide communication a health care listserv will be set up in October. The Ad Hoc Committee plans to send its proposal for education and action to the Board for consideration in November. Information on the plan should be available in November UPDATE.

Education Update: The Board has approved the scope of the study, and the eight-member committee has started the study process.

Community College System: The Board has approved the Ad Hoc Planning Committee's interim plans. The committee plans to establish a listserv to facilitate state-wide communication and to send a proposal for education and action to the Board in November.

Energy Update: The Ad Hoc Planning Committee is working on a plan to recommend to the Board.

Marion Taylor, *Lcgislation Director,*
League of Women Voters of California

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.



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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.

LWV *League of Women Voters*
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VOTER

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