

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

President's Message

ONE OF THE PERKS of belonging to the League is to meet others who also care deeply about voting. Such was the case last week when I attended the Community Voter Outreach Committee, put on by the Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk. This meeting takes place quarterly at the County Recorder's office in Norwalk.

Although not quite a hop, skip and a jump away, I didn't mind the drive down the 5 because the meeting is fascinating and packed with interested and interesting people. There were nearly 40 people in attendance. The League of Women Voters was well represented, with League members from all over the county in attendance. Also in attendance was a representative from the Democratic Club, as well as a physician who is part of a movement to make sure patients are registered to vote—personal health and the health of the democracy all in one.

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Dean Logan gave a report on the June 3 election. He told us that 812,308 voters cast ballots in the county's 4,783 voting precincts. With 4,027,819 registered voters for the election, that constituted a turnout of 20.17 percent. While he let that number pass without comment, I couldn't help but be discouraged at the low turnout. However, many more are expected to turn out for the November 4 election, and LA County is getting ready.

They've improved poll worker training by adding on-line training to supplement the training classes already given. They've improved the telephone system to help answer the inevitable calls for help on election day.

I came with a question of my own. I had heard that the California Secretary of State, Debra Bowen, has re-designed the voter registration form. Right now, the form is long and cumbersome, and the new form will be more streamlined. I wanted to know what the status was, and how soon we might be able to use the new forms. He told us that the forms are waiting to be printed, but are held up along with everything else during the state budget crisis. Once they are printed, LA County will start using the new form—they won't wait until all the old forms are used up before implementing the new ones. I can't say if they will be ready before registration closes on October 20, but they will be an improvement whenever they arrive.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued on page 2

2008
Calendar
September

Thursday
September 11
Fall Social
Gordon Biersch Brewery and
Restaurant
6:30 pm
Topic:
NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE
RSVP by Monday September 7
marquezlww@earthlink.net
(818) 760-3667
Appetizers provided

Saturday
September 27
**LWV/LAC Ballot Briefing for
November Election**
9:30-noon
Registrar Recorder's Building
12400 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk CA 90651-1024

Saturday
September 27
**Proposition 11 Action
Workshop**
Norwalk Public Library

Thursday
October 23
9:30-noon
Candidates Forum
Congress, State Senate and
State Assembly

Glendale Now Has A New Campaign Finance Ordinance

by Laurie Collins

The City of Glendale City Council enacted its first campaign finance ordinance on July 22, 2008 with the gentle prodding and guidance of the Glendale Burbank League. The City of Glendale is over 100 years old - so this is truly a momentous event.

The new ordinance limits campaign donations to \$1000, and restricts the period of time that donations can be raised from the September before the following April municipal election. A candidate can raise money to pay off campaign debt for only six months after the April election. Limitations were placed on loans to candidates. Contributions from applicants for entitlements are banned. Office holder accountants are limited to \$10,000. This new ordinance is a giant step forward toward leveling the playing field and bolstering public perception of the integrity of the local political process.

The Glendale Burbank League may take some credit for the enactment of the ordinance. In 2006, the League studied campaign finance reform, and came to

a consensus in favor of "support for reasonable limitations on campaign contributions in city council, school board and community college elections, including any recall election, referendum or propositions." But the League didn't stop there. The study did not stand alone, but became the basis for action. League president **Monica Marquez** met with the City Attorney and presented the League's consensus report. This report was incorporated into the City's staff report for the new ordinance.

In order to better understand the issue and to provide information to the community, the League organized a forum on campaign finance reform, inviting experts in the topic from neighboring cities to discuss the topic. The forum was well attended.

Monica spent many a Tuesday night thereafter at City Council (**Anna Rundle** at her side) as the ordinance made its way through numerous hearings. In the end the City Council congratulated the League for its participation.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

Our League is gearing up for the fall election, as well. We have 12 initiatives (so far) on the state-wide ballot, and we are preparing non partisan pro and con presentations. We will tape our presentation in the Burbank City Council Chambers on October 4. We will also do the presentation live for a number of community groups. We are also planning a candidates' forum for Congress, State Senate and State Assembly in the fall.

You can be part of this work. One of the best parts of League is that you can help as much as your schedule allows. Stretch your public speaking skills with us, and present a ballot measure or two. Join us at the candidates' forum to greet people, pick up questions, sort questions and hand out membership materials. Email me at marquezlwv@earthlink.net for more information or to get involved.

Monica Marquez

Redistricting - Voters FIRST Is Proposition 11!

California Voters FIRST, the League's major redistricting reform proposal, has qualified for the November ballot and is now Proposition 11.

We are gearing up for a major campaign to convince voters to pass the measure. The LWVC



needs local Leagues and members

throughout the state working in their communities to make it happen. We need members and supporters to speak, blog, write letters to the editor, and do everything they can to be ambassadors for redistricting reform in their communities. Please help us! Contact the LWVC or a Glendale/Burbank League Board Member to find out how you can connect in your community to make reform happen. A summary of this ballot initiative appears on page 3.



Background: What is redistricting?

- ⌘ Every 10 years, after the census, new boundary lines for Congress and CA Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts are drawn. Currently, the CA State Legislature draws those lines. This is a major conflict of interest.

How would California Voters FIRST Act change redistricting?

- ⌘ **14-Person Citizens Redistricting Commission.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a politically balanced Commission - 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 4 others. Commissioners would be chosen for their impartiality, skills, and to reflect our State's demographic and geographic diversity.
- ⌘ **Protecting communities, cities, and counties.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a list of prioritized mapping criteria for the Commission to follow. This would ensure that our Constitution, federal and state laws are followed. California's communities, cities, and counties must be respected.
- ⌘ **Open and public process.** The Commission would hold hearings to receive public input. The California Voters FIRST Act would end the closed-door political deals by legislators to draw districts that protect themselves.

How would the Commission be formed?

- ⌘ California registered voters are invited to participate.
- ⌘ A pool of 60 (20 Ds, 20 Rs, 20 others) is selected based on their skills, ability to be impartial, and diversity by a review panel of state auditors (1D, 1R, 1 other).
- ⌘ The 4 Legislative Leaders can strike up to 24 people from the pool.
- ⌘ Out of the remaining pool, 8 Commissioners are randomly picked - 3 Ds, 3 Rs, 2 others.
- ⌘ The final 6 Commissioners (2 Ds, 2 Rs, 2 others) are chosen by the 8 Commissioners from the remaining pool based on the balance of skills and diversity they would bring.

What Mapping Criteria would the Commission have to follow? In ranked order, the criteria are:

- Districts shall comply with the US Constitution, including equal population requirements.
 - Districts shall comply with the Voting Rights Act.
 - Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
 - The geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhoods, or communities of interest shall be respected. Communities of interest shall not be defined as having a relationship with incumbents, candidates, or parties.
 - To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be compact.
 - To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be nested.
- * *Incumbent residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to favor politicians or parties.*

What is the scope of the Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

- ⌘ The Commission will draw California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization seats in the next redistricting, 2011 and after each decennial census.
- ⌘ The State Legislature will draw Congressional seats, following the same mapping criteria and hearing requirements as the Commission.

Please go to www.commoncause.org/cavotersfirst
for more information and to read the full initiative.



Two Views From the Polls . . .

We have a special feature in this issue of the Voter. **Dionisia Rodriguez** and **Monica Marquez** worked the polls during the June 3 election. Di is an experienced poll worker, while Monica was a first time poll worker. They have written up their impressions of working the polls. For information on becoming a poll worker, go to the web site for the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, www.lavote.net.

Monica Marquez writes:

AFTER THINKING ABOUT IT FOR YEARS, I finally decided that I should work the polls. Last year, I signed up online, but never heard anything. Then, the Friday before the June 3rd election, the County Registrar Recorder's office called me. They were desperate for poll workers in my area. I thought it would be a good opportunity for some public service, and an interesting endeavor.

My first step was to attend a poll worker training class. Fortunately, there were classes on Sunday the 2nd. I thought it would be a small class, but when I got there I was one of over 100 people in a large room with no air conditioning at Pierce College. It was two hours of nonstop information. My head was swimming when I left, but I thought I was ready. The trainer would explain possible voting scenarios and how to handle them. He ended each section with a suggestion of that we say to the voter: "Thank you for voting . . . have a nice day."

Tuesday morning, I reported to my poll at 6 a.m., filled with enthusiasm. There were five of us, three poll workers and two Inspectors, a married couple. The other poll worker didn't show up. None of us poll workers had ever worked an election before, and the Inspectors were doing their second election.

Since this was a Primary Election, there were nine different types of ballots, one for each party, plus ones for Decline to State voters who wanted to cross over to either the Democratic or Republican Parties.

The procedure was fairly straightforward. The voter

first gives his or her name to the first poll worker, who looks then up by name and has them sign the register. This worker calls out the party of the voter to the poll worker handing out the ballots. Next, you look up the address and cross it out. This has to be done not once, not twice, but three times. The first is the master list, then there is a secondary list. The third list is supposed to be hung outside the polls and rotated each hour with the other secondary list. The poll worker is supposed to keep both the second and third lists current, while still checking off addresses on the Master list.

The voter then receives the ballot and votes, and then goes to the poll worker working the ballot box. The voter puts the ballot in the box, which reads it for overvotes and undervotes, then gives out the coveted "I Voted" sticker. "Thank you for voting . . . have a nice day."

There was what seemed to me to be a heavy stream of voters, although the Inspectors kept assuring me that turnout was light. It didn't take long for us to get bogged down keeping the address lists up to date.

No formal provision is made for breaks—poll workers are supposed to catch a break for lunch and dinner whenever they can, if they can, and if voter turnout is heavy, no breaks are scheduled. One Inspector and I took short breaks to bring back food for our fellow poll workers.

TWO VIEWS continued on page 5

Provisional ballots take some time to do because the voter has to fill out a lot of information on the Provisional Ballot envelope. There is nowhere in the polling place for the voter to fill out the ballot—no extra table space or anything.

Thirteen exhausting hours after we started, the polls closed. Now it was time to break down the polls and count the ballots. Any pretense of patience on the part of the Inspectors melted away. It appeared to me that they just wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. The number of ballots voted had to match the number of signatures in the register. We had to count the unvoted ballots and make sure that the voted and unvoted ballots matched the number of ballots given to our polling place. My fellow poll worker, who had the medical condition, was overwhelmed and unable to count. As for myself, well, I'm not that great with numbers, and I was really tired. Not surprisingly, none of our totals matched. We had to re-count. Our recount came out even worse. By then it was close to 10 p.m. We had to stop. My inspector told me that the Registrar said to count twice, then just pack it up, because the ballots had to be turned in. We gave up.

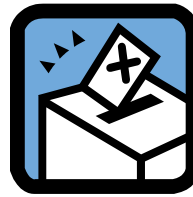
All this and we had a total of 151 voters, less than a 10% turnout. I cannot imagine what will happen in November, when a large turnout is expected.

I came away thinking that this system is crazy. It's insane to have exhausted people doing something as important as counting ballots. A 16 hour day with no breaks creates impossible working conditions. The pay for working at the polls is \$80, or about \$5 per hour. It takes unfair advantage of people who believe in service and democracy.

I think that poll workers should work 8 hour shifts. Under that system, poll workers could work a reasonable amount of time, and a fresh set of eyes would be counting the ballots after the polls close. I believe it would be easier to get poll workers if they knew they didn't have to work for 16 hours.

I don't know if I'll work the polls again. Poll workers are desperately needed, but the working conditions were so adverse, I don't think I want to go through it again. I love voting and democracy, but I think the poll worker system is in dire need of an overhaul.

Dionisia Rodriguez writes:



THE JUNE 3RD State Primary Election was the fourth time that I worked as a poll worker for LA County. I have always worked in Atwater Village and the last two times I worked in the precinct where I would normally vote. Working at this precinct makes being a poll worker more fun because I get to see my neighbors and acquaintances in the neighborhood. As a friend puts it, I always make every event a social event. But I was so disappointed with the election because of the very low voter turnout. I only saw three people I know because in my precinct, we had low voter turnout - 75 voters out of potentially 1000. For the first time, I was so bored. I was used to seeing people lined up when we declare the poll officially open at 7:00 in the morning. Yesterday, the first voter came in at about 7:30 and by 9:00 a.m., we had three people who voted. The upside of the low turnout was reconciling the number of ballots at the end of the day was a walk in the park. For crying out loud, how can I make a mistake counting 75 ballots? Edgar, who was assigned to give out the ballots, had more difficulty counting all the unused ballots.

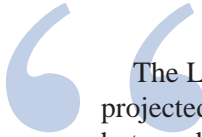
In spite of the boring experience, I will continue being a volunteer poll worker. It makes me feel that I am doing my part in protecting the sanctity of the vote. I also feel that I am paying tribute to my father, who always reminded me of the value of making my voice heard through the vote. Growing up in the Philippines where the right to vote has at times been compromised and where graft and corruption were so common, my father maintained that these were the very reasons why I should vote and do every thing I can to maintain the sanctity of the vote.

I believe my precinct was no different from most other precincts in the county. At the end of the day, all we could say to each other was "thanks for the break this election," because we are looking forward to a very busy election day in November.

LWVC: Action on California Budget Gap



On August 22, the League of Women Voters California sent letters to the four state legislative leaders regarding the state budget gap. The text of President Janis Hirohama's letter appears below:



The League of Women Voters of California understands the challenge of a projected budget gap of \$15 billion between expected revenues and spending, but we do not believe it can be addressed solely through spending cuts, borrowing, and the shifting of funds.

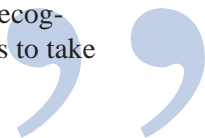
The impact on Californians of the cuts that have already been made in basic health care is staggering, and all of the current budget proposals include further reductions in such essential services. These cuts in health care, education, and other areas will chiefly affect those Californians who are least able to bear the burden, including children, the elderly, and the disabled. Moreover, quick budget fixes that will shortchange our education, infrastructure, and environmental needs will harm the long-term economic future of our state. We are already falling far short of the resources needed to educate our young people for the economy they will enter, our capital improvement needs are outrunning the funds essential to keep our infrastructure up to reasonable standards, and our natural resources are threatened.

We would support a reasonable plan to improve the state's "rainy day fund," but proposals to impose rigid spending caps would simply mean that we would continue to cut back critical services that Californians need and expect to have.

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, with emphasis on the ability to pay.

As the current economic situation reduces both state and local revenues, the demand for services increases. California, even with its problems, is one of the largest economies in the world. Taxes do not subtract money from the economy; they allow for government expenditures in areas that are critical to a healthy economy. California's long-term economic potential cannot be realized, nor can its quality of life be protected, unless we invest in education, health services and infrastructure.

We urge the Legislature to make difficult choices and come together on a budget that will minimize damaging cuts this year and then to move on to a serious consideration of our budget process and finance system. This year once again shows the consequences of a process and system that is widely recognized as dysfunctional. Californians have a right to expect their leaders to take on the task of improving it.



Speaking Opportunities for November Election:

“Pro/Con” and “Advocacy” Speakers Needed

Now’s your chance to shine and do important work on behalf of the League. Become a speaker at one of our “PRO/CON” forums and share your knowledge about the ballot measures (no knowledge—we’ll train!). Here are the dates:

October 4:
Taped presentation at the Burbank City Council Chambers

October 9:
Glendale Commission for the Status of Women

November 1:
California Council for the Blind

We also have a new opportunity this year. You can participate in an advocacy presentation for the AAUW on October 18 and pro-

vide information regarding the League’s positions on key ballot initiatives. Please note that if you choose to be an advocacy speaker, you cannot participate as a speaker at a “PRO/CON” forum.

The Los Angeles County LWV is offering speaker training on September 27 from 9:30 to 12 (see Calendar for details). If you are unable to attend, we can you give a copy of the speaker materials and provide some training in advance of the forums.

If you are interested in participating as a speaker at one of these events, please contact Monica Marquez via e-mail at marquezlww@earthlink.net. She can also be reached by phone at (818) 760-3667.



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All Citizens of voting age are welcome. Associate Membership is open to all others.

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)

- \$60.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$100.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

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

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Gifts made payable to “LWV Education Fund” are tax deductible.

The Voter

THE VOTER IS PUBLISHED nine times a year by the League of Women Voter of Glendale/Burbank, California.

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



FALL SOCIAL

GORDON BIRSCH BREWERY
AND RESTAURANT

145 S San Fernando Blvd, Burbank

Topic: *NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE*

Thursday, September 11, 6:30 pm

RSVP by September 7

email: marqezlwv@earthlink.net

phone: (818) 760-3667

Appetizers provided

249 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203
Corner of Brand/Calif.
tel: 818.244.4448
fax: 818.244.4795
M-F 8:30-6, Sat. 10-4
1125 E. Broadway
Glendale, CA 91205
Btwn Chevy Chase/Adams
tel: 818.242.4270
fax: 818.242.0525
M-F 8:30-6:30
Sat. 10-4, Sun. 12-4



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<http://www.lwvglendaleburbank.org>

LWV California
<http://www.ca.LWV.org>

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