

Voter

**LEAGUE OF WOMAN VOTERS
GLENDALE/BURBANK**
February 2012

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

CALENDAR February 2012

Saturday,
February 11, 8:30 am -
noon
EXPLORING
PRIVATIZATION-
LWV PASADENA
Neighborhood Church
301 N. Orange Grove
Blvd., Pasadena

Thursday,
February 16, 6:00 pm
House of Joy
818 N. Pacific Ave.,
Glendale
PROGRAM PLANNING

www.lwvglendaleburbank.org

President's Message

By Joan Hardie

Coming in April— A New Voter Format

Now that the vast majority of our members receive the Voter electronically, it is time to update our format to take advantage of current technology. Beginning with the April 2012 issue, we will change our format to an e-Newsletter, which is now the most common format groups use to communicate with their members.

How Will the Voter Change?

Instead of having to click and download a pdf file, the entire newsletter will appear, graphics and all, directly in your inbox. Plus, we will have links to in-depth content created not only by us, but also by other Leagues and quality organizations around the country.

What if I receive the Voter by Mail?

We will not leave you behind! We will continue to send you the Voter by mail. It will look a bit different, but what you need will be there!

Members Meeting Program Planning

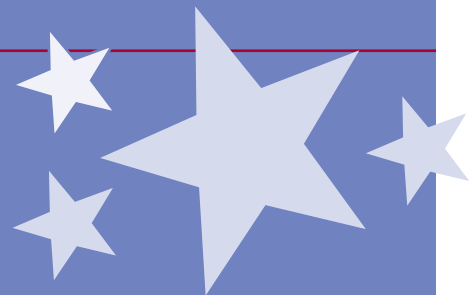
Where: House of Joy
818 N. Pacific Ave. #1
Glendale CA 91203

When: Thursday, February 16, 2012
6:00 pm

Cost: Buy your dinner or share with a friend

What is Program Planning?

Every two years state and local League and ILO's participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues - this is how we remain a grassroots organization. Program planning is an important League tool for identifying issues for study.



Glendale/Burbank League Members Conduct Legislative Interviews

Every year, League members across the nation fan out to interview their local legislators. The purpose of this exercise is to learn the legislator's position on the issues directly from him or her. In keeping with the nonpartisan nature of the League, the interviews are for information only. The League members are not there to advocate any position—only to hear the legislator's. Each League asks the same questions, which are provided to the legislator in advance.

Glendale/Burbank's interview this year was with California Assembly Member Mike Gatto. In attendance were Chris Carson, Dionisia Rodriguez and Renee Leask. Di and Renee offer their reflections below.

An afternoon with Assembly member Mike Gatto By Dionisia Rodriguez

The first e-mail I received from *Chris Carson* in 2012 was an invitation to join her on the legislative interview with *Assembly member Mike Gatto* on January 6 at 1:00 p.m.

I "met" Assembly member Gatto during the 2011 League Christmas Party. It was not by any design, other than availability of seats, that I found myself seated next to him. Because of redistricting, I am now a constituent of Assembly member Gatto because I live in Atwater Village. We had an interesting conversation, and I found out that he lives in Silver Lake, not far from where I live and that he grew up in the area, before his aide summoned him.

Because I have never participated in any of these legislative interviews, and, being retired, did not have any pressing appointment to keep, I decided to volunteer to join Chris. After all, I thought, I kind of "know" Mike Gatto. Yes, at this age, I am still the star-struck teenager, that after a five-minute conversation with a "celebrity," I believe I know him.

At the Board meeting prior to the legislative interview, Chris warned us that the Assembly member might not be there and that we do not know how much time has been allotted to us. We could meet with one of his aides for thirty minutes. Oh well, I thought. That's just the way the cookie crumbles.

But the afternoon of January 6, 2012 proved to be a very good experience for me. Assembly member Gatto gave us an hour to answer questions regarding where he stands on issues to help the League establish its legislative priorities. Our first question to Mr. Gatto was regarding the California budget. He believes

that the budget cannot be balanced solely by cutting expenses. He believes that California should look at more stable sources of revenue. He believes in collecting taxes on some services. California, he says, has more plastic surgeries done than any other state, yet we do not tax plastic surgeries.

On the initiative issue, the Assembly member believes that it needed to be reformed. While the initiative process was established to give people a voice, it has become a tool of special interest groups. While most of his proposals towards reform of the initiative process have been vetoed, some of his proposals are still alive. He believes that high speed trains can improve the quality of life of many. If people are not held hostage for hours in heavy traffic, they will have more time to spend with their children at home. He also believes that we cannot survive by solely providing service and selling goods made in China. Manufacturing must be returned to our state. It was such an interesting interview and Mr. Gatto seemed to be enjoying himself as much as we were. One of his staff, knocked at the door to remind him that it was getting close to two o'clock. Our hour is up. Mr. Gatto told us that of all the groups he talks to, he likes talking to the League the best, because he knows he will not be taken out of context.

On our way out after our interview, he shook my hand and said "it was nice to see you again." WOW, he remembered me and that made my day. Or maybe I just thought he said that.

An afternoon with

Assembly member Mike Gatto By Renee Leask

On a spectacular January day recently, Chris Carson, Dionisia Rodriguez and I met our Assemblyman, Mike Gatto, in his Burbank offices to ask questions provided by the California League. This may be old hat to some members, but it was the first time I have ever been in the office of one of my elected representatives. I was excited to help with this very basic League function, because this is my favorite thing the League does: information gathering.

To people who've been involved with the League for a long time, this probably seems like a League minimum – but I guarantee you, it's not done often enough and it's not often done well. Our written journalism is losing personnel at an alarming rate and our broadcast journalism is little more than a branch of entertainment. Even the sharpest journalists sometimes fall under the spell of politicians, who are good manipulators by default. But I believe that high-information voters (as good a definition of League members as you'll find anywhere) are less prone to fall for manipulation, and less likely targets for a politician's full manipulative powers.

I was struck with the utilitarian quality of Mike's district office. It's possible that his Sacramento office is luxurious. I met Mike while he was running for office, and he stopped in briefly to the Glendale/Burbank League's recent Holiday Party.

The League's first question was about California's revenue problem and asked what measures he would support to change the budget process. He showed a welcome knowledge of California's economic history, particularly our tendency toward dramatic rises and falls, and the legacy of Prop. 13. His opinion is that California depends too much on unstable revenue sources, such as taxing capital gains, which he described as "inherently volatile." It was reassuring to hear that he was advised before he was elected to study up on the state's political and economic history, and he took this advice to heart.

During the interview, Mike told a story about Lyndon Johnson, which he had read in one of Robert Caro's trilogy of books about the President. When Johnson was beginning his career, he thought about what he could do to most help his rural Texan constituency. He decided that bringing electricity to the region would become his cause: people could have more leisure, because they could have electric appliances that would help with laundry, etc.; and people could read more, because they would have steady light after the sun went down. Mike Gatto has asked himself the same question about Glendale/Burbank, and he wants to bring more rapid transit. He and his wife are avid cyclists and he wants to see people less dependent on cars. He can see a future transformed.

This is why it's good to meet your elected representatives in person when you can.

Before we left, Mike called the League "white hats" – concerned citizens who aren't looking to pick a fight. I was honored by the thought. This is certainly why I joined the League – I have as many opinions as anyone and more than most, but the League asks us to use our minds and deal with facts rather than emotion. I'm glad that my Assembly representative thinks this is a good thing. I wish more people did.



Yours? Mine? Ours?



Exploring Privatization



This community forum will explore various models of privatization from complete divestiture (selling off public assets and public spaces) to contracting out services or sharing services with other cities as well as formation of public/private partnerships. The focus will be privatization in the San Gabriel Valley and state levels.

Saturday, February 11, 2012
Neighborhood Church
301 N Orange Grove Blvd, Pasadena
FREE ~ Reservation Requested
8:30 a.m. Registration
9:00 a.m. Program begins
Noon Adjourn

PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS:

Mark R. Alexander, City Manager, City of La Cañada Flintridge
Cynthia Kurtz, President and CEO, San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
Scott Ochoa, City Manager, City of Glendale
Frank Zerunyan, Director of Executive Education, Senior Fellow, USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development

EMCEE AND PANEL MODERATOR:

Jan Sanders, Director of Libraries and Information Services, City of Pasadena



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
PASADENA AREA

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. 626-798-0965 E-mail: office@lwvpasadenaarea.org website: www.lwvpasadenaarea.org

Please make reservations no later than February 6, 2012.

- E-mail the League at office@lwvpasadenaarea.org with "RSVP Feb. 11" in the subject line.
- Phone the League office at 626-798-0965 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. M-F
- By mail to the League office, LWV Pasadena Area, 1353 N. Hill Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104

Name _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____ E-mail _____

Number of reservations _____ (Please list names for all guests who are registering)



The Rules Have Changed: Elections 2012

By Lianne Campodonico, LWVC Voter Service Director

There are significant changes for the 2012 elections, which mean a great opportunity for LWV voter service efforts. The Top Two primary system will be used in June, online voter registration could be up and running in the summer, and redistricting means that many voters will see different names on the ballot and/or new district lines. This is an opportunity for local Leagues to do enhanced voter service work to help avoid voter confusion. It's also a great opportunity for League members who haven't participated in voter service work to do so, and for your League to recruit new members.

Redistricting

With the new state district maps drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission last year for Congressional, state Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts, many voters will find themselves in a new electoral geography with new district boundaries for the upcoming election cycle. Some voters in the state will see unfamiliar names listed on their ballot as incumbents; for some there will be no incumbents running; others will see multiple incumbents listed on their ballots for a single contest. For example, there are three dozen new districts in the state with no incumbents living in them. In the Los Angeles area, there are five newly drawn districts with two incumbents sharing the same district. To learn more, see the CAVotes redistricting update: <http://cavotes.org/issues/redistricting-implementation>. There you will find links to the new maps for Assembly, state Senate, and Congressional districts, as well as important information about the challenges to the new redistricting maps that may affect implementation at election time.

Top Two Primary System

There are actually two primary elections taking place on June 5, 2012: a) the Presidential Primary, which is a partisan party nomination process used to select candidates for President and county central committees and b) the statewide Top Two Primary elections for congressional and state elective offices. The Presidential Primary produces "party-nominated candidates" for president who then appear on the November General Election ballot by party. This is the type of primary that California voters are used to. The Top Two primary system, however, produces two "voter-nominated candidates" who have received the two highest vote counts and who then advance to the November General Election. Even if one of the candidates receives more than 50 percent of the votes, there is still a "runoff" between the top two vote getters. With the Top Two Primary system, all candidates running for an office are listed on one ballot, regardless of their party preference. All voters may vote for any candidate in the list.

Here are some of the special features of balloting in the Top Two system that need to be understood by the voters:

RULES continued from page 5

- The Top Two system was placed on the June 2010 ballot by the legislature as a result of state budget negotiations and was passed by the voters.
- Voters will not see a “straight party ticket” on the ballot, but rather a list of names for the different contests with each candidate’s party preference indicated. However, a candidate for a voter-nominated office may choose not to have his or her party preference—as disclosed on their most recent affidavit of registration—indicated on the ballot.
- It is possible for two voter-nominated candidates with the same party affiliation to appear on the November ballot.
- Political parties may endorse candidates in the Top Two primary. Sample ballots must include a section listing these party endorsements.
- Although votes may be cast for write-in candidates in the Top Two primary election, no write-in votes are allowed in the November general election for the Top Two contests.

As of this writing, there are court challenges to the Top Two Primary system currently pending, based on the ban on write-in votes in the General Election for Top Two offices and on constitutional issues of third party access to the ballot and voters’ right of choice.

For frequently asked questions about the primary elections in California, you can go to this link on the Secretary of State’s website: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/2012-elections/june-primary/faqs-primary-2012.htm> .

May 21, 2012 is the last day to register to vote in the June 5, 2012 primary elections.

Online Voter Registration

The Secretary of State would like to see Californians able to register to vote online sometime in the summer of 2012, in time for the November General Election. In October the Governor signed into law SB 397 (Yee) that allows the state to begin registering voters online before the completion of a planned new statewide voter registration database. State elections officials and the Department of Motor Vehicles are currently working on the technical details of using DMV digitized signatures for matching registrations submitted online.

The League, along with many other good government groups, has long supported online voter registration as a way of allowing more people to participate in elections and of protecting against fraudulent paper registration. Online registrants will be required to provide their birthdate, the number from their valid California driver’s license or California ID card, *and* the last four digits of their social security number. Dean Logan, Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, has called this development “a game changer.” In the last statewide election in Los Angeles County, his office received 64,000 registration affidavits the day after the deadline. He was certain that if online registration had been in force, many more people would have voted in that election.

How To Witness History— On Your Own Terms

Most, if not all League members are also viewers of Congress on C-Span. We take it for granted now, but C-SPAN was only created in the late 1970s when cable TV was getting started. C-SPAN (which, for you wonky trivia buffs, stands for Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network) was created to provide public access to the political process. It serves its purpose well (and is occasionally derided by comedians as the network with only 1 camera).

The Supreme Court, however, has decided not to broadcast its public proceedings. To see the Supreme Court in action, you have to show up.

Here's the procedure:

There are seats available to the public in the gallery of the Supreme Court. Seating is limited and on a first come first serve basis.

Before the hearings begin, two lines are formed on the plaza in front of the building. One line is for those who wish to attend the entire argument, and the other (a three minute line) is for those who wish to observe the Court in session only briefly. Seating for the first arguments begin at 9:30 AM, and for the three-minute line, at 10:00. Since Supreme Court hearings on important cases draw large crowds, not everyone will be accommodated. More information can be found at [HYPERLINK "http://www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/visitorsguidetooralargument.aspx"](http://www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/visitorsguidetooralargument.aspx) www.supremecourt.gov/webloc



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. You can do it all online at our [Website](#).

Or you can use this form to mail in your application. 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)

- \$70.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$110.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER nine times per year)
- \$35.00 for a one-year student membership.

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

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 PO Box 21010, Glendale, CA 91221

LWV Glendale/Burbank is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. All gifts and membership dues are tax deductible.

Voter

The Voter is published nine times a year by the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank, California

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

PLEASE

**remember the
League of Women Voters
in your will or trust.**



Laurel Pavone
Notary Public • Live Scan Tech

Hours
M - F 8:30am-6pm
Sat 10am-4pm

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LEAGUE OF WOMAN VOTERS GLENDALE/BURBANK

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www.ca.LWV.org

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