

Voter



LEAGUE OF WOMAN VOTERS
GLENDALE/BURBANK

January 2009

The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

CALENDAR

Thursday

January 15, 2009

League Dinner

See page 2

Thursday

January 22, 2009

League Candidates Forum

Burbank City Hall

275 E Olive Avenue

7:00 pm

Saturday

January 31, 2009

County League Day

Tuesday

February 24, 2009

Burbank All Mail In

Primary Election

Closes at 8:00 pm

March 2009

Glendale Candidates Forums

Saturday

March 29, 2009

LWV Los Angeles County

Annual Convention

Pickwick Gardens

Burbank

President's Message

Monica Marquez

"There are so many things I've done in the League that I could never have imagined when I said I wanted to volunteer. But the farthest from my pre-League mind was being asked by the State League to record a Robo-call for Proposition 11 on Redistricting."

I used to prepare a chart for family and friends with my election picks. I would call the judicial candidates and ask them why I should vote for them. Most were flabbergasted to get a call from a potential voter, but I wanted to be fully informed. I did a spreadsheet and sent it to family and friends before each election.

Several years later, I thought of creating an organization that would provide non-partisan political information to a wider audience. I found it hard to get information about political candidates that wasn't slanted. I wanted just the facts. It would be called PocketPolitics. Politics so small it could fit in your pocket. Just what you need to know. It could be a book that would be sold at the checkout counter at the bookstore. This was in the early days of the web, and way before blogs. I even registered the name, and still have it today. I was taking graphic design classes at the time, so I designed a logo, which I still have tucked away in my desk.

Then I found the League in the middle of the night, when I couldn't sleep and was surfing the web. I didn't really know anything about what the League did when I sent in my check and membership application. All I knew is that I had some extra time, and some extra energy, and thought I could help out by stuffing some envelopes. I wrote a little note with my check, saying "I want to volunteer."

I was surprised and delighted when Chris Carson called me and asked me to come to a Board Meeting to "see what the League does." I was also a little apprehensive. But I went. Turns out it was the only Board Meeting I've ever been to where there wasn't a quorum, so we sat around and talked about the League, and what it does.

Imagine my surprise to find out that there was already an organization that did everything I imagined PocketPolitics would do, and more. And that it had been around since the 1920s!

President's Message continued on page 2

President's Message

continued from page 1

I soon took over as webmaster for the Glendale/Burbank and County League websites. Then things really started to get going. There were candidates' forums to be done in Glendale, and they needed someone to oversee them. There were so many candidates, we had to put on two forums—one for City Council, and the other for Clerk and Treasurer. I organized them both, not really knowing any of the people involved. But everyone I worked with was friendly and helpful. Plus there was something like 19 candidates for City Council and almost that many for City Clerk. I found myself still breathing at the end of the process.

One evening Georganne Thomsen called me and asked if I would be President. I was both flattered and horrified. Not only was I pretty new, I hardly knew anything. But she assured me that it would be all right, so I said yes. It was a very daunting task. For my first Board Meeting, I wrote out a script that was nearly 10 pages long. I didn't want to say the wrong thing, but I sure hoped I didn't bore people with my delivery.

There are so many things I've done in the League that I could never have imagined when I said I wanted to volunteer. But the farthest from my pre-League mind was being asked by the State League to record a Robocall for Proposition 11 on Redistricting. Robocalls are those recorded political calls that drive many people crazy. As part of its campaign in support of Redistricting, the State League coordinated two Robocalls—one for voters in general, and the other targeted to Hispanic voters. Yours truly was the Hispanic voice. Originally, I thought they wanted it recorded in Spanish, so I translated the text and recorded a Spanish call. But the next morning I found out they needed it in English, so I re-did it. Much easier.

The next day I got a call from a long lost cousin—she got the Robocall! So did my dad. He thought I sent it to him directly, so he hung up on me. Fame is fleeting.

I deeply appreciate all the opportunities the League has given me and can't wait till the next thing comes up.



League Dinner

Enjoy an evening
with League friends at the **new**
Embassy Suites

Thursday
January 15, 2009
6:15 pm

800 North Central
Glendale, California

**You will be responsible for choosing
and paying for your entree**

RSVP
Anna Rundle
818 247-2407
annarundle@aol.com

LWVC Weighed In

Senate Bill 375 Reduces Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Land-Use Plans

OF THE BILLS related to implementation of AB 32 and greenhouse gas reduction efforts, SB 375 (Steinberg) made its way to the Governor's desk and was signed! It is the "first-in-the-nation" law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by curbing sprawl. In his comments at the time of signing, Governor Schwarzenegger mentioned other California "firsts," adding, "...with this landmark legislation, we are the first in the nation to tackle land-use planning. What this will mean is more environmentally-friendly communities, more sustainable developments, more alternative transportation options and neighborhoods we can safely and proudly pass on to future generations." The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, press releases, and more on the Governor's comments, are available online.

SB 375 was enthusiastically supported by the League. LWVC President Janis Hirohama sent a letter to the Governor on September 24 urging him to sign the bill, noting that it:

"Requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to set targets for greenhouse gas emissions, based on travel demand models, for [17 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, MPOs, in California]"

"Requires regional entities to establish sustainable communities strategies that identify areas to sufficiently house all the population of the region, identify a transportation network to serve regional needs, take into consideration the impacts of development of important resource lands and farmlands, and meet the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by the ARB."

Prop 11 Passes The next phase begins with your help

WE DID IT! California voters had enough of partisan gridlock and legislative conflicts of interest and passed our redistricting reform measure. Thanks to the many members who phone-banked, spoke to community groups, handed out campaign information, wrote letters to their local newspaper, e-mailed their friends and colleagues, and generally gave it their all.

So it's all over? No, indeed. League members know that this was only the first step. We need to monitor the new process and do extensive public outreach. Interested in helping this major change get off the ground? Read our redistricting page, UPDATES, and the LWVC News ([sign up here!](#))

We have a brand new citizen engagement project coming very soon. Get ready to be a part of history.

LWVC CONVENTION 2009
Long Beach, CA

Catch the Wave to the Future

Friday, May 15 through Sunday, May 17



League of Women Voters of California®
www.lwvc.org

save the date

Cloudy Days in Sacramento

Anne Henderson, LSVC Program Director, State/Local Finance

THE NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION began on December 1 with newly-elected legislators joining holdovers in plunging into a complicated political dance. The choreography begins with negotiations on how to resolve a huge shortfall in the current year's budget and moves into the question of how to approach the entire picture of the state's budget through June 2010. The legislators heard that the shortfall in the current 2008-09 fiscal year was \$11.2 billion and that the deficit would grow to about \$28 billion by the time the 2009-10 budget is added in, if corrective actions were not taken. As if that were not enough, two other elements, a special session on the economy and potential ballot measures to be placed on a special election in 2009, are also tossed into the mix.

By the end of the following week, estimates of the deficit had grown to \$15 billion for the current fiscal year and an additional \$25 billion for 2009-10—a total of about \$40 billion that, because of the state of the economy, continues to increase every minute.

New Session, Same Old Problem

Legislators had hardly been sworn in when the Governor declared a fiscal emergency and called a special session (<http://gov.ca.gov/issue/state-budget/>) to address the shortfall in the current year's budget. The Legislature will have 45 days to resolve the problem, and if it fails to do so may only consider budget issues until the problem is resolved. The state is likely to have a cash flow crisis by the end of February if the problem is not quickly addressed.

The special session the Governor called in the final days of the last legislature failed to reach any agreement. The Governor had proposed roughly equal changes from both new revenues and added cuts to close the gap. His new revenues included a 1.5% increase in the sales tax, taxing some services, a 9.9% oil severance tax, a 5 cent a drink tax on alcoholic beverages, and a \$12 per vehicle raise in vehicle registration fees. His cuts fell chiefly on health and human services, K-12 education and higher education.

In response, Democrats had conceded that further painful cuts would have to be made, and they suggested a return to the old Vehicle License Fee (VLF). The fee had been reduced to a rate of 0.65% of a vehicle's value when the state had a budget surplus in the late 1990s, with the intent that it would be returned to the previous 2% rate if needed in leaner times. Governor Schwarzenegger eliminated that higher rate when he first took office, and the idea of a return to the old percentage remains unpopular with the public. It would produce about \$5 billion per year but would take too long to implement to be a solution to this year's shortfall, although if approved, short-term borrowing against it might be pos-

sible. Democrats had also proposed a one-year suspension of the inflation adjustment of personal income tax brackets, a move that would bring in another billion dollars or so. Republicans had resisted new revenues and demanded more cuts, but had not specified where they would make enough cuts to cover the shortfall, and the November session ended in an impasse.

The Session on the Economy and a New Commission

On December 1 the Governor also called a special session to "implement an economic stimulus package to help retain and create jobs, keep Californians in their homes and fix the state's Unemployment Insurance Fund." (http://gov.ca.gov/pdf/press/Special_Session_Proclamation_December_1,_2008.pdf) The latter is almost broke and may be taken over by the federal government.

Some specifics of the plan immediately divided Republicans and Democrats. These included changing regulations on overtime pay, meal and rest periods and flexibility of work schedules in ways that are advocated by business and opposed by labor.

A new bipartisan Commission on the 21st Century Economy (<http://www.gov.ca.gov/index.php?/press-release/11233/>) has just been created and charged with recommending changes to modernize California's "out of date revenue laws that contribute to our feast-or-famine state budget cycles." Of the commission's 12 members, six were appointed by the Governor and six by the legislative leadership. The commission is to report by April 15.

Previous commissions have covered this ground with little to show for it, but at least their reports may serve as a basis for beginning discussions. Commissioners are likely to take up the revenue changes proposed by the Governor in the previous special session, as well as the VLF and ideas suggested by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), and these will become part of budget negotiations for next year's budget.

Ballot Measure Issues

Republicans also renewed their demand for a ballot measure that would require more money to be put in the reserve fund and make it much harder to access it. They also want tough spending caps that would make it difficult to raise spending even in better times.

Such a measure was part of the September budget deal (<http://www.lao.ca.gov/laoapp/PubDetails.aspx?id=1892>), and was supposed to go on the ballot in a special election to be called this year, along with

Cloudy Days continued on page 7

The League of Women Voters Through the Decades! **The 21st Century Part I** Compiled by Kay J. Maxwell

Previous issues have covered the League's history from its beginnings on February 14, 1920. This article continues the story into the 21st century.

Organization:

A hallmark of the new century was the commitment on the part of the League to increased use of electronic communication to League leaders across the nation. A monthly electronic newsletter was begun and the League's membership database became available electronically for direct updating by League membership chairs.

At convention 2000, the per member payment (PMP) for student members was set at one half the regular rate and direct member input on program planning was implemented. For the first time, membership brochures were produced in Spanish and in 2004, the League received the Civic Change award from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

Issues:

Beginning in 2000 Issues for Emphasis were no longer selected at conventions and, at the 2000 convention, the League adopted a concurrence to add support for restoration of the federal payment to the District of Columbia. The League offered the first "candidate debates" online through the League's Internet based voter education program, DNet. DNet ended in 2005, but was replaced by the even more effective voter education web site, Vote411, in 2006. The League adopted updated positions on Trade and the UN in 2001 and 2002, an updated position on election of the president in 2004, as well as a concurrence in support of the abolition of the death penalty and a study of immigration policies at convention 2006.

The League was instrumental in the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002. The League worked to renew the Voting Rights Act, and filed a number of amicus briefs relating to campaign finance reform issues, racial bias in jury selection and Title IX. Beginning in 2004, the League focused its legislative work under a "Democracy Agenda" umbrella that included redistricting, civil liberties, campaign finance reform, voting rights for District of Columbia residents, election administration reform and ethics and lobbying reform.

The League launched a nationwide voter education campaign on "5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day" in 2004 that was repeated in 2006. In addition, the League engaged in a multi-year education project on Judicial Independence. A major effort was the Local Voices Project that fostered a dialogue on the critical issue of balancing homeland security and civil liberties.

The League continued its international work through several Global Democracy Programs that included working with women in Africa, Brazil, Ukraine and Russia. In addition, the League participated in a number of programs that focused on increased understanding of international affairs on the part of Americans.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF)

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the League established two 501(c)(3) educational organizations that, like the LWVUS, are nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations, but, unlike the LWVUS, also can accept contributions that are deductible for income tax purposes. In 1957, the LWVUS Board established the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). The LWVEF undertakes a broad array of citizen education and research efforts, which complement the membership and political action activities of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Coming next issue: The Overseas Education Fund (OEF) and conclusion

Although a separate legal entity, the LWVEF is closely related to the LWVUS; in fact, the LWVUS Board members also constitute the LWVEF Board of Trustees. While the LWVEF provides citizen education information to a larger-than-League community, the LWVUS benefits from its research, and the budgets of each organization reflect this relationship. Thus, (1) the LWVEF conducts and funds research on national issues and undertakes educational projects in cooperation with state and local Leagues aimed at providing information and educational services to the public; (2) the LWVUS conducts and funds all action, membership and organization-related activities; and (3) administrative services used by both organizations are shared.

The unique network of local and state Leagues has a multiplier effect in bringing the Education Fund's services to the wider public. Through workshops, conferences and the distribution of publications, Leagues disseminate LWVEF's materials. The LWVEF also sponsored the 1976, 1980 and 1984 Presidential Debates and the 1988 and 1992 Presidential Primary.

League Sends Letter to President-Elect Barack Obama

The League's letter congratulated the President-Elect and urged him to explore new ways to bring all Americans into policymaking efforts.

December 8, 2008

Dear Mr. President-Elect,

First, the League of Women Voters would like to congratulate you on your election. The League has a deep commitment to promoting the informed and active participation of citizens in their government. This year's election was an impressive example of the kind of widespread involvement of citizens that makes our democracy strong!

It is with that same commitment to true citizen participation that I write to you now as you assemble the members of the administration that will govern for the next four years.

We all recognize the extraordinary number of issues facing your Administration. In subsequent letters to you and the appropriate members of your Cabinet, I will address the League's specific concerns about such major problems as health care, climate change and partisan tensions in our nation's government.

But, the most important message I want to send to you now is that none of the issues can truly be resolved by the officials in your Administration without the full and active participation of multiple voices. Nor can problems be solved if they are discussed behind closed doors. Please encourage each of your Cabinet nominees to commit now to explore new ways to bring all Americans into the policymaking efforts of their departments. We see your health care policy team's current efforts as an excellent start in that direction.

For almost 89 years, the League has been well known for our work in engaging the public in the policymaking work of government at all levels, and in holding those governments accountable. Many organizations are expert at bringing their organizations' points of view to the attention of elected officials. But, the members of our 850 state and local Leagues around the country and the dedicated staff at our national office in Washington, DC, are not concerned just about making our organization's voice heard. We work to make sure that everyday Americans, who are affected by government policies, have a chance to be heard by both elected officials and the federal bureaucracy.

The League of Women Voters looks forward to working with you to help bring transparency to the federal government and opportunities for the public to be heard.

Sincerely,
Mary G. Wilson
President
League of Women Voters of the United States

Welcome New Member
Renee Lasik



Cloudy Days

continued from page 4

the Governor's proposal to expand the state lottery in the expectation of raising more money for the state. The lottery proposal is intended to realize \$5 billion in both the 2009-10 and 2010-11 budget years through the sale of bonds that would be repaid by the future lottery revenues. The measure would also provide that education would continue to receive as much as it now gets from the lottery, with future adjustments for school population and cost of living.

In the present credit environment it seems probable that those bonds would have to be guaranteed by the state's General Fund (GF) and pay a relatively high interest rate, if they could be sold at all. The LAO also says that while the bonds could help balance budgets for the next two years, after that they would cost the state about \$1 billion annually.

When the budget was passed in September it was assumed that these measures would move to the ballot soon, probably in June 2009, but the Legislature has not actually set such an election. Republicans and the Governor will presumably press for it to be scheduled, but it is by no means clear that Democrats will see any advantage in moving either of those measures to an early ballot. These are not measures with much appeal to the public, which has probably had enough of elections for the time being. It would probably be a low turnout election, which usually means one with a fairly conservative base.

And for the latest news and information on League action on the budget, visit our website Budget page

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/budget/index.html>

LWV Non-Partisan Policy

The League of Women Voters has a special history of maintaining its non-partisan approach. While we encourage our members to run for office, participate in party politics and help with campaigns, the League remains non-partisan by providing no support nor opposition to any candidate for office. Board members have restrictions on what they may do politically. Officers are further restricted to help maintain this reputation and to foster broad dialogue on issues. Policies exist at the local, state and national levels. The LWVGB Board wants you to know that the League at all levels does not and will not support or oppose any candidate.



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 _____

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

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

Gifts made payable to the "LWV Education Fund 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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EDITOR: Chris Carson
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CIRCULATION: Anna Rundle

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.



What will your legacy be?

As a leader in your community, you know what you want to accomplish for yourself, for your family, and for your community. Consider making the League of Women Voters* part of your overall estate plan next time you speak with your attorney or financial professional, so that your hard work will carry on.

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

LWV United States
<http://www.LWV.org>

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