

League of Women Voters Glendale/Burbank

May 2005 Calendar

Wednesday
May 4
Board Meeting

Saturday
May 14
Annual Meeting
Castaway Restaurant
See flyer on page 2

May 20-22
Friday-Sunday
**LWVC Biennial
Convention**
Garden Grove

Saturday
June 25
**“Local Voices:
A Public Conversation
on
Homeland Security”**
Los Angeles City College
9am-2pm

Nominees

At the Annual Meeting on Saturday May 4, at the Castaway Restaurant in Burbank we will be voting on a slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee. The recommendations follow:

OFFICERS

President	Monica Marquez
First Vice President	Gwen Cochran
Secretary	Mary Dickson

ELECTED BOARD

Rosa Frommer (2 years)
Barbara Paul (2 years)
Dionisia Rodriquez (2 years)
Inez Trueeger (1 year)

REMAINING IN OFFICE

Second Vice President	Anna Rundle
Treasurer	Vera Naylor





League of Women Voters
of Glendale/Burbank

66th ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, May 14, 2005

Location: Castaway's Restaurant

1250 E. Harvard Road, Burbank

Registration & Coffee: 9:30am, Annual Meeting: 10:00am-2:00pm

Lunch Speaker:

**Margarita Campos,
Burbank City Clerk
"Burbank's All Mail Ballot"**

As usual, we have a wide selection of wonderful prizes for the drawings at the meeting. Even if you are unable to attend the meeting, you may still purchase tickets for these drawings—just fill out the form below. Tickets are \$1.00 each, or six for \$5.00; checks payable to LWV G/B.

Cost: \$25, includes morning coffee, lunch (including a vegetarian option) and materials. If your registrations is received by May 3rd, you will be eligible for a special drawing. Reservation must be received no later than May 7th. Checks should be made payable to LWV G/B.

RSVP for meeting to *Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank, 91504*

Name(s)_____

For Lunch: Vegetarian Option: Yes____ **Allergic to Nuts? Yes**_____

Purchases of Tickets to *Connie Wilson, 3013 No. Keystone, Burbank, 91504*

Name(s)_____ **No of Tickets** _____

Our League Moving Ahead



WHAT ON EARTH are we going to do this year, now that there are no elections occurring and candidate forums to be held? Yes—the League of Women Voters does other things besides hold candidate forums. One of those things is conduct studies on topics that involve public policy questions in our two cities. And we think we have a study for this coming year that will be both informative and important.

In the aftermath of the elections in Burbank and Glendale, many members have concerns about the way elections are held in our two cities. Glendale members are asking if election to local offices should be by a majority vote. If so, how should it be structured? A primary/run-off? Or another method such as Instant Run-Off Voting? The City of Burbank elects representatives by a majority vote. But the primary/run-off is costly to both the City and candidates. Would Instant Run-Off Voting be good for Burbank as well?

Interest in this issue is growing all over the state. There is a bill in the state legislature which would allow counties to use Instant Run-off Voting if they choose. The Los Angeles Times has called for Instant Run-Off Voting to be introduced for the office of L.A. Mayor. Leagues around the state are studying this issue for their local cities and counties. Come to the Annual Meeting, find out about the proposed Study. We hope you'll support it and join in. And if you're going to be in Katmandu on May 14th, let us know by phone or email if you'd like to sign on.

Shaking up the Status Quo: The Movement to Transform High School

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE failed to reduce the number of dropouts and to increase the number of students who enroll in college despite the state's imposition of high stakes testing and a curriculum based on high academic standards. Two independent studies of California's high schools, by Rand and Harvard University, have indicted California for failing to improve student retention and success in high school. What are strategies which can improve this dismal situation?

Speakers and panelists at the EdSource Conference on high school education, **Shaking Up the Status Quo**, addressed this dilemma on March 17 in Manhattan Beach. More than 300 educators, administrators, parents/PTA, League members and other interested people attended the all day conference, including **Sally Rivera, Harriet Chase, Pat Kromka, Bea Antenore, and Margo Reeg** from L A County Leagues.

OVERVIEW

Gerald Hayward, an EdSource Board member and senior partner at Management Analysis & Planning, Inc., opened the event with an overview of the current condition of California high schools. Among his observations are that high schools are difficult to change. Not only is California well below other states in the amount of money spent on schools, but California has a relatively high percentage of uncredentialed teachers and about one-third of teachers are teaching outside their area of specialization. There is a mismatch between expectations to meet high school standards and preparation teachers receive. Regrettably, the least prepared teachers often are in schools with the neediest students.

Consequently, a lower proportion of high schools meet the Academic Performance Index target goals than do elementary and middle schools. The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) requirement was delayed by the Legislature from 2004 to 2006 because it was anticipated that too

many students would fail. Yet CAHSEE skills levels are not particularly high. (8th grade math and 10th grade English) The gap between what the workforce needs and what schools provide to most students is widening. A lower percentage of students are prepared for college—many must enroll in remedial math or English classes. And the gap between the preparation of white and Asian students versus Black and Latino students is widening. A lower proportion of students are taking UC and CSU required classes (a-g classes) and the SAT entrance exam.

So what can California do? Hayward says the state needs to focus on preparing students for college and the workforce a challenging goal. Schools must pay more attention to transitions between middle school and high school and between high schools and college. Districts need to look at both curriculum and structure of schools. They need to provide academic support with counselors and librarians. Reforming high schools will not be easy or cheap. Educators and leaders will have to educate the public, be flexible on ways to achieve greater success, and focus on results—more students completing high school with better skills.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Raising expectations by requiring all high school students to enroll in the UC/CSU curriculum classes (the a-g courses covering math, English, foreign language, sciences and social sciences including government and economics) is the goal of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. **Tom Vander Ark**, Executive Director of the Gates Foundation, expounded on that idea. The educational focus of the Gates Foundation is on high schools. Foundation money is being granted to foster School Improvement, create new schools, and improve school policy and governance. Vander Ark pointed out that statistics show that of the students who start high school about 1/3 will graduate ready for college or work, 1/3 will drop

Shaking continued on page5

out before graduating, and 1/3 will graduate unprepared for college or work.

Julio Daniel, a student at Manual Arts High in South Los Angeles, spoke about students' desire to be challenged. He asserted that today's high schools have not changed for 50 years. Our high school curriculum was designed for the U. S. of the past when factory jobs were plentiful and paid a living wage. He is a member of South Central Youth Power Through Action which is working to improve schools in disadvantaged areas. They will demonstrate at LAUSD to ask Board to require the UC/CSU courses for all students. They also want better counselors with higher expectations for their students.

Vander Ark stated that all schools need to provide the Three Rs—Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. One solution to provide all three is to change the structure of schools by making them smaller. Small schools, or small “houses” or academies within large schools, can be more relevant to the students, provide more intimate relationships for students and teachers, and can be more rigorous. These schools must also set high expectations and measure for results.

Vander Ark admitted that starting small schools in California is hard and fixing struggling schools is very hard. Charter schools are important but their impact is limited. Transforming districts requires a theory of action, outside help and a sustained commitment to succeed. California should implement “college ready” standards for all students, create high quality schools in poor areas, and build the capacity to improve struggling schools.

CALIFORNIA CHALLENGES

To explain what California is attempting to do about high school education, **Jack O'Connell**, California Superintendent for Public Instruction and a former high school government teacher and state senator, addressed the audience. Beginning in 1996 the Legislature decided to invest more money into elementary education by funding Class Size Reduction in the primary grades and by investing in the development of standards based curriculum

and the STAR testing program aligned to the standards. This resulted in improvement of elementary school test scores 5 years in a row. But it didn't translate to middle and high schools.

O'Connell went on to state that high school is a bigger challenge. Although more students are taking harder UC/CSU required courses and more are graduating, there is much to be done. Materials and textbooks are not always aligned to the standards. High schools may choose books and materials from many sources because they are not approved by the state textbook committee as are books for elementary grades. Materials are not uniform from district to district or school to school. The curriculum is aligned by discipline within a district but not across each grade level. O'Connell recommends that textbooks be aligned to curriculum standards for California. (California's standards received an A grade from the Fordham Foundation—one of only three states to earn that rating.)

O'Connell supports the Algebra I requirement for all students because it develops problem-solving skills. He would like to see an Algebra II requirement in a few years. He has been working on career and technical training instruction in high schools. The state has developed standards for career and technical courses and has gotten both UC and CSU to consider technical courses as fulfilling entrance requirements.

Among the other goals the Superintendent has identified is the need to develop smoother transitions from middle to high schools and from high school to college. Programs such as AVID, Puente, and MESA are helping some students prepare for college. Another program being developed is the Early Assessment Program for 11th grade. This includes an augmented STAR test with 50 specific questions in reading and math and a writing sample which is designed to be scored and have results sent back to schools in time to help students in their senior year focus on skills needing improvement. It will also allow students to avoid

college placement exams and help them decide whether they need to enroll in summer school to get prepared for college.

In addition O'Connell reported that the P-16 Council (preschool-16th grade) composed of business leaders, labor representatives, and civic policy makers has recommended that California invest more in high schools. They propose creating solutions to invigorate the high school curriculum, organizing smaller schools and more academies, providing more counselors, encouraging standards-based professional development, partnering high schools with CSU/UC campuses, and working more effectively with English Language Learners and Learning Handicapped students.

O'Connell also stated in answers to questions that he opposes bills in the Legislature to eliminate the HSEE and thinks that the Governor will veto them if they pass. Students who don't pass in time to graduate in senior year could be provided a 5th year of high school to develop the necessary skills. However, a diploma is not needed in order to attend community college. He feels that the Governor's merit pay for teachers proposal would be counter-productive. Teachers should be working together and mentoring each other, not competing for raises.

NEED FOR NEW SOLUTIONS

Two panels presented innovative solutions for revitalizing high schools to make them more relevant and more effective. The philosophy behind each is that students need a challenge not remediation. One approach is the Early College High School. **Ref Rodriguez**, Executive Director of CALS (CA Academy for Liberal Studies), explained that CALS is a charter school which requires the UC a-g courses plus arts classes for all students. Classes at the school, housed in a high rise near the LA Public Library, meet during the day from 8 to 3. Students meet with their advisors from 3:45 to 6 and attend college classes from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Los Angeles Trade Tech provides arts technology and college level classes. The school has a Gates grant which allows them to rent space and hire competent, qualified teachers who care

about the students and mentor them.

At Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy, located on the Harbor College campus of L A Community College, the goal is for all students to receive a high school diploma and an AA degree at 18 according to Principal **Mattie Adams Robertson**. Students from this "blended institution" can then go directly to Cal State Dominguez Hills as juniors in the teacher education program. In 2004 every one of the students passed the CAHSEE. Attendance is expected and rewarded. Every student has an Individual Education Plan and follows a rigorous standards-based curriculum. Freshmen enroll in college classes and can earn 9 college credits. Sophomores are encouraged to complete 16 college units and juniors take from 6 to 22 college units. Individual attention from teachers, high expectations, rewards for attendance and the challenge of college classes motivate students to stay with the program and achieve.

The Met Charter School in Sacramento Unified is an urban "Big Picture" school which opened in 2003. **Principal Beth Kay** described the unusual real world learning concept in which students spend 2 days per week working with professionals in various occupations. Every student must design a special individualized project which he will complete during the year. The small classes, 15 to 18 students per teacher, allows for lots of personal attention. Students stay with the same advisor for their 4 years. Advisors meet with kids both morning and afternoon. Students have individual education plans which support their individual projects, and the school provides resource teachers and after school help. The school makes classes relevant to real work experiences. Both kids and teachers care about each other.

MULTIPLE HIGH SCHOOL PATHWAYS

The afternoon panel discussed Multiple High School Pathways, a concept championed by **Dr. Robert Schwartz** of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Schwartz made a case for Multiple Pathways for students in high school, as a means to

double the number of youth who graduate from high school and continue on to earn a college degree or a certificate of competency in a trade or vocation. He argued that the challenge is to construct additional pathways for students to get them through high school with competency in reading, writing, and math. Among the possibilities are the City Year of community service, career academies, and other vocational-technical approaches such as internships and applied learning which combine rigorous courses and work in real jobs. This will supply relevance for students yet insist on basic competence in academic skills.

Schwartz proposes that every child be promised an Individual Education and Training Account which he can access when he earns a high school diploma. This Account could be used for any qualified post-secondary education leading to a diploma or credential. Funding for the education and training accounts would be an extension and expansion of the current federal Pell grants or state grants such as Cal Grants, but would not be restricted to academic colleges. This would be an incentive for

students to finish high school.

All speakers for the day agreed that California high schools need to improve outcomes for more students. Most agreed that by raising expectations and requiring more rigorous classes and more relevant classes there would be a larger number of students prepared to go to college and the workforce. Creating schools in which students and teachers can forge positive relationships and encourage success will help keep students in school and focused on graduating with the skills to pursue post-secondary education.

Margo Reeg, LWV/LAC President

CATHY SELLITTO
NOTARY PUBLIC
Mobile Service
Business Hospitals Residence
(818) 502-0661



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 (include a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Name/Names _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

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

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

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

The Voter

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

President: Chris Carson

Editor: Chris Carson

Production: Carole Dougherty

Circulation: Anna Rundle

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 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.



WELCOME NEW MEMBER
JOAN HARDIE

CONGRATULATIONS TO
MARSHA RAMOS
reelected to Burbank City Council

MARGARITA CAMPOS
reelected Burbank City Clerk

ARMINE HACOPIAN
reelected to Glendale Community
College Board of Trustees

JOYLENE WAGNER
elected to Glendale Unified School
District Board

1125 E. Broadway
Glendale, CA 91205
Brdwy / Chevy Chase Dr.
tel: 818.242.4270
fax: 818.242.0525
M-F 8:30-6:30
Sat. 10-4; Sun. 12-4

249 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203
Corner of Brand / Calif.
tel: 818.244.4448
fax: 818.244.4795
Open M-Sat.



MAIL BOXES ETC.
A UPS Company

Andrea Williams
Manager / Notary Public

EMBE centers are independently owned and operated businesses

League of Women Voters
Burbank/Glendale

VOTER

7714 Via Capri
Burbank CA 91504
(818) 247-2407

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

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

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

Printed courtesy of Mail Boxes Etc.