



League of Women Voters Torrance Area
Serving Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita and Torrance

<http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org>
new number: Tel. 310-223-6897

LWVTA *Voter*

September 2010

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters Torrance Area, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism. This means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

Contents

President's Message..... 1
 Open Government..... 2
 League 101..... 3
 Education Report 4
 Ballot Briefing 5
 Calendar 6

The **LWVTA Voter** is published monthly except July and December. All LWVTA members are encouraged to provide relevant articles and calendar events for publication in the **LWVTA Voter**. Articles must be nonpartisan and are subject to editing. Email submissions to martinvoter@verizon.net before the 15th of each month. The editor is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information reported.

Editor: Geneva Martin

President's Message

At this time, we need to let you know that Linda Brown resigned from her position as Co-President of LWVTA. Linda says that she needs a while to more fully recover from a recent surgical procedure. And, while Linda will not be on the LWVTA Board, she has offered to continue as the LWVTA's Liaison on the Tri-League Committee. This is a group consisting of Beach Cities, Palos Verdes Peninsula, and Torrance Area League representatives that meet to arrange for speakers of mutual interest to members and guests at various locations in the South Bay Area.

The Torrance Area League is very thankful to Linda who has served us as President during the years 1993 to 1997, as Co-President with Gladys Meade in 2004-2005, as Co-President with Barbara Barker and Carol Adams Smith in 2005-2006, as Co-President with Barbara Barker in 2006-2007 and, most recently, as Co-President with me during the past year 2009-2010. Linda served as our Membership Director for many years. In the past, Linda also served on the LWV/California Board as Co-Membership Director with Carol Adams Smith. Linda Brown served our local and state League with distinction and her actions inspire us to carry on the work of the League by continuing to encourage informed and active participation in government. All of us wish Linda a speedy return to good health.

On Saturday, **September 11, 2010** from 1 to 3 PM at the Torrance Airport Meeting Room there will be a special meeting of the LWVTA League. We are calling it "**League 101, the ABC's of LWV.**" We plan on getting together to chat, get acquainted and have a snack. Charter members and other long time members will be there to tell us about what issues got us started in 1962 and other exciting moments along the way since then. See the attached flier and let me know if you need a ride.

Later in the month, on **September 25, 2010**, there will be a **Ballot Briefing** on Pros & Cons for the November 2nd election taking place at Hollenbeck Palms, LA from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. This is an opportunity to hear the pros and cons presented and discussed to help members of the Torrance Area League prepare to be speakers to explain the ballot measures to local organizations. Even if you don't want to do any presentations yourself, this will be a special opportunity to hear explanations and discussions of the ballot measures from those who have researched them in depth. Call me at (310) 375-7410 if you want to carpool and/or just let me know if you will be able to join us there.

Lola Ungar

Open Government

City of Torrance CDBG Program by Dee Hardison

On July 21, 2010, the Torrance City Council voted to rejoin the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program as a member of the Los Angeles Urban County CDBG program. The CDBG is a federal grant program which supports cities and other jurisdictions in providing programs and physical improvements that will benefit seniors, handicapped persons and persons with low to moderate income levels. As part of the L.A. County CDBG program, Torrance is under the umbrella of the County's Consolidated Plan. The City will pay the County 10% of Torrance's CDBG funds to administer the program.

As a member of the County Consortium, the City can not only use the CDBG funds with the City, but also have the opportunity to trade CDBG funds for unrestricted dollars with another member of the County Consortium similar to what is currently done with transportation funds.

If the City decides not to trade their SDBG funds, these funds would be available for a wide range of physical improvement programs, such as infrastructure improvement, public facilities development or improvement, handicapped accessibility or home rehabilitation.

As this is the beginning of the third year of the current County CDBG Program. Torrance will be joining for one year. At the end of one year, Torrance will be able to decide whether to rejoin for the following three year planning increment. Torrance could also decide to be a stand-alone entitlement City which would require the development of a Consolidated Plan for just Torrance.

New Phone Number

Please note we have changed our phone number. The new number is 310-223-6897.

Voter Registration Information

DID YOU KNOW?: 6.5 million Californians are eligible to vote but have not registered. Tell your family and friends to register and vote so they can have a say in California's future!

To vote in the November 2 General Election your voter registration form must be postmarked no later than October 18.



Board of Directors 2010-11

*President: Lola Ungar**
*1st Vice President, Voter Service: Pat Kromka**
*2nd Vice President, Voter Editor: Geneva Martin**
*Secretary: Kay White**
*Treasurer: Sue Martin**

Directors

Natural Resources: Margaret Carter
Fundraising/Program: Athena Paquette Cormier
Communications: Sydne Morrison
Education/Social Policy: Gerry Rische

Off-Board Portfolios

Agriculture: Judith Gerber
Government: Dee Hardison
Health Care: Barbara Barker
Land Use: Lola Ungar
Libraries: Judith Gerber
Redistricting: Lola Ungar

Committees

Budget: Dick Smisek
County Jail Study: Lola Ungar & Emma Simmons
Executive: Noted by asterisks
Nominating: Barbara Barker

Facebook: Emma Simmons

Webmaster: Barbara Barker

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown

League 101



League of Women Voters of Torrance Area
Serving Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita and Torrance

*You are cordially invited to enjoy
an afternoon of education and fun*

LEAGUE 101



ABC'S of LWV

Saturday, September 11

1 to 3 PM

Airport Meeting Room

Zamperini Field

*Time will be set aside to chat,
get acquainted and have a snack*

Structure and purpose of the League will be explained, how it operates, special "lingo," various activities that include studying issues, action, voter service, and how members get involved. Charter members will be in attendance to tell us about early issues when we started back in 1962.

The program is geared to current members, new members, and prospective members.

Make reservations and carpooling arrangements by calling our new LWVTA phone no. (310) 223-6897 or (310) 375-7410. Bring a friend or two, a fellow member or just come and enjoy yourself.

Education Report

--Aug. 7, 2010 Interview notes from talk with Dr. George Mannon, Torrance superintendent of schools by Tom Rische

For the coming year, Torrance laid off 77 teachers (all tenured). In March, layoff notices were sent to 120, as required by law, due to budget uncertainties. Last week, 25 of those were rehired. There are no temporary teachers now. Most substitutes are laid-off tenured teachers. Coaching stipends were eliminated. Some 127 teaching positions were cut, along with 58 classified positions and 14 administrative jobs. In 2006, the district employed 3200 people. Now it has 2700. Between the two administrative offices on Plaza del Amo, 44 people were laid off. Some, including one of the superintendent's two administrative assistants, were retired and not replaced. All the Child Welfare and Attendance division (Pat Kromka's old job) was disbanded, with duties spread elsewhere. Over the last two years under present allocations, Torrance cut \$35M from its budget, in the next two years may have an additional \$27M drop (\$62M in five years.)

This district expects about 24,000 students this year.

By law, Torrance cannot use Prop Y & Z bond funds for general fund budgets.

Some 93% of funds now come from the state. Without some changes in state funding, worse years are coming, and there are no easy answers. Funds follow the business cycle, which makes it impossible to make long-term plans. California is the No. 1 state this year with school funding problems; Illinois and New York are close. In contrast, Texas seems to be doing fairly well. State funding of K-12 education dropped from \$5,376 in 2009-10 to \$5,321 during the upcoming school. This represents an 11.3% decline over the last four years. Community colleges were cut 4.8%, CSUs went up 3.8%, and universities of California, 5.2% increase.

Employment possibilities for prospective new teachers are bleak. Dominguez has greatly diminished teacher education enrollments.

PTAs provide money for field trips and related things. The Torrance Educational Foundation rewards innovative programs.

Class sizes were raised on all levels this year. K-3 from 20 to as much as 30. High school classes to as much as 40 or more.

Teacher will take five furlough days next year, with resulting loss in pay.

There will be less staff development and less resources for teachers.

The federal Race to the Top program is a "fake, a fraud." If California got the funds, Torrance could get \$40,000 a year for four years to reevaluate its teacher evaluation system, since the funds are earmarked.

The talk about poor teachers is painted with broad strokes based on anecdotal problems in urban districts, like Los Angeles. Urban districts are unfairly compared with suburban districts, like Torrance.

With a 99.7% rate a couple of years ago, Torrance ranked first in graduation rates in California. Its lowest in recent years has been 97%. Part of the differences are the varying rates of how "special education" kids are counted--or not counted. These may vary from year to year.

About 10% of Torrance students are in special education, including autism. These classes are mandated by the federal government, which does not pay its "fair share."

Torrance gets \$300,000 from the volunteer "dollar a day program", but much more is needed just to retain present standards.

Health Costs Rise for Torrance Teachers

The Daily Breeze reported in its August fifth edition that health costs for Torrance teachers have increased because of elective procedures by teachers fearing layoffs -See [Health costs rise for Torrance teachers as a result of layoff fears](#).*

*http://www.dailybreeze.com/ci_15689072



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Inter-League Organization — Beach Cities • Claremont Area • East San Gabriel Valley • Glendale/Burbank • Long Beach Area
Los Angeles • Palos Verdes Peninsula • Pasadena Area • Santa Monica • Torrance • Whittier

BALLOT BRIEFING PROS & CONS on November ballot measures



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2010
9:30 AM TO 12:00 NOON
HOLLENBECK PALMS
573 S. BOYLE AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90033

Be sure to come early to pick up your Pros & Cons.
You will be directed to your stacks inside the Parking Garage.

There will be a separate room set aside for Action/Advocacy.

Ballot Briefing



About the League

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has two separate and distinct roles. The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund, which conducts our voters service and civic education activities, is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonprofit educational organization. The League of Women Voters Torrance, a membership organization, conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) corporation. The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and on which they have come to consensus. 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. With membership comes the opportunity to work with well-informed, grassroots activists on a broad range of public policy concerns. The League provides members with opportunities to learn valuable, transferable skills, including how to organize and run productive meetings, write more effectively, speak in public, organize and run effective campaigns, conduct research studies, and coordinate general civic leadership training.

Thanks to our donors:
Barbara Barker &
Ray Krank

JOIN THE LEAGUE

Yes! I want to make a difference!

I want to make a difference in the decisions that affect my life. I know every new member makes the League more effective in influencing public policy on issues I care about.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (Day) _____

(Evening) _____

Email: _____

Individual \$70 Household \$105
Student \$35

Please make checks payable to: League of Women Voters Torrance Area

Additional contributions are always welcome.

Mail to: League of Women Voters Torrance Area
Post Office Box 964, Torrance, CA 90508

Voter Deadline Dates

September 3-October 18 – Overseas voter registration period

October 4 – Counties begin mailing vote-by-mail ballots

October 18 - Last day to register to vote

Oct 19-Oct 26 – New citizen voter registration period

October 26 - Last day for the county election office to receive your vote-by-mail application. Go to <http://www.lavote.net/> for LA Country election information.

Nov 2 – Last day to request your vote-by-mail ballot in person

Nov 2 – Election Day (polls open from 7am-8pm). Find your polling place on www.smartvoter.org



Calendar

September 2, 7p.m. Board Meeting
(Call for location)

September 11, 1-3 p.m. League 101,
Torrance Airport Meeting Room

September 25, 9:30 a.m. to noon LA
County ballot briefing Pros and Cons,
Hollenbeck Palms

October 7, 7 p.m. Board Meeting
(Call for location)

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members. Keep up to date with important League of Women Voters communications. Check out national, state and county issues on-line at:

National: www.lwv.org

Smart Voter: <http://www.smartvoter.org/>

California: <http://ca.lwv.org/>

California Education Fund: www.cavotes.org

Los Angeles County: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org

Torrance Area: <http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org>

For protection of privacy, when sending emails that include anyone outside this membership, please address the names on the Blind CC (BCC) line so that the addresses do not show.

Board Meetings are open to all members and held on the first Thursday of each Month except May.



League of Women Voters Torrance Area

Serving Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita and Torrance

Post Office Box 964

Torrance, CA 90508

Address Service Requested

Time Dated