



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

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

Tel. 310-618-8711

LWVTA Voter

June 2009

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Torrance, 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.

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The *LWVTVoter* is published monthly except July and December. All LWVT 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 wuertzvoter@earthlink.net before the first weekend of each month. The editor is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information reported.

Editor: LaVonne Wuertz

President's Message

Both Linda Brown and I want to offer our special thanks to Barbara Barker who just retired as President of LWV Torrance. Keeping up with Barbara's planning and organizational skills will be a very difficult act to follow. We are planning on working as a committee of the board and sharing many of the usual president's duties with our Board of Directors.

If you missed it, here are a few of the highlights of our Annual Meeting on May 30, 2009 at Marie Callender's. First of all, the motion to change our name elicited quite a lively debate among the attendees. There were some choices, but we finally agreed upon **LWV TORRANCE AREA (LWVTA)**. Not exactly zippy, but the name does recognize our history that we want to preserve and incorporates the new public image that we would like to present as serving the nearby cities of Carson, Gardena, Harbor Gateway, Lomita, and Torrance.

Our LWVTA budget was approved and there are many line items that need financial strengthening. Most assuredly, our best bet is to become more active in raising funds by officiating at more apartment/condo elections. We had great fun at one election when Bertie Wood brought a Torrance map jigsaw puzzle that kept us busy whenever there was a lull in voter activity. We divided up the day

into teams who spent a minimum of two hours at the polls. Perhaps, you can take part when we send out the call for volunteers next time.

We also approved existing programs with no new study. You can find our stances on local issues in your roster. County, state and national issues can be found on each of their websites.

Dr. George Mannon, Superintendent of the Torrance Unified School District (TUSD), was our keynote speaker. His speech was about the future of our schools and the difficulty of planning for the next school year without a finite budget from Sacramento. He praised the League for standing up for what is right and encouraged everyone to subscribe to his e-mail notes at www.tusd.org. He also praised the community for passing Measures Y and Z (capital improvement bonds) and noted that these local bonds were sold in January.

TUSD is facing \$14 million in cuts that will cause reductions in personnel and programs. Special education (IDEA) costs encroach on the regular education budget to the tune of \$27 million. Dr. Mannon would like to see more local control of funds and the lessening of the penalty or perhaps, no penalty for raising class sizes in K-3 from 20 to 24 during these tough times. He reminded us that **California is ranked 47th among the 50 states in spending on education**. We were also

(Continued on p. 2, President's Message)

League of Women Voters of Torrance Area News

President's Message *(cont'd from p. 1)*

the only state to cut PE last year. Our state has the largest class sizes and the highest ratio of students to nurses, counselors, and administrators.

In other matters, our League is following the City of Torrance Budget review process. The City's budget shortfall has grown to \$5.7 million because sales tax revenues continue to plummet in this uncertain economy. No layoffs or major cuts to programs are anticipated. To balance the budget, a combination of increased fees, modest program reductions and organizational efficiencies will be employed.

A further review of various city fees was ordered by the City Council as they tried to minimize price hikes for residents on such items as recreation programs. On Tuesday, June 23rd, the Council will have to make some very unpleasant choices.

With the aid of the LWV/LA County League, we plan on providing pro & con information on any propositions that make it to the ballot

Our next event is the "Previous and New Board Potluck" on Saturday, June 27th, 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM at my house. Besides enjoying the food and the company, we will work on our Calendar for the LWVTA 2009-2010 year.

Now, I must remind you about those luscious popovers. The LWV/LA County will be holding its annual Popovers in Pasadena Luncheon at the Women's City Club on Saturday July 25, 9:30 to 2 PM where the Keynote Speaker will be Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca. Send in your reservations soon for there will be workshops for Presidents, Education, Redistricting, and Natural Resources.

Finally, save the date for the Tri-League Kickoff on Saturday, September 26th where you will network with our closest local League members (Beach Cities and Palos Verdes Peninsula Area) on what is happening in local, county and state government. Read more about it in our next issue of the *Voter*.

Linda Brown and I look forward to a new and exciting year with you in League!

Lola Ungar, Co-President

Board of Directors 2009-10

President of Record: Lola Ungar
Co-President: Linda Brown
1st Vice President/Smart Voter:
Pat Kromka
2nd Vice President: Sue Herbers
Secretary: Kay White
Treasurer: Sandra Strong

Directors

Advocacy: Lola Ungar
Communications: Sydne Morrison
Financial Development: Vacant
Juvenile Justice: Vacant
Government/Elections: Sue Herbers
Membership: Linda Brown
Natural Resources: Andrea Wagner
Observers: Vacant
Program: Vacant
Public Relations: Vacant
Social Policy: Barbara Barker
Voter Editor: LaVonne Wuertz
Voter Service: Vacant
Additional Director: Gerry Rische
Additional Director: Emma Simmons

Off-Board Portfolios

Energy: Rick Wagner
Health Care: Barbara Barker
Land Use: Lola Ungar
Mental Health: Carol Adams Smith
Open Government: Dee Hardison
Water and Agriculture: Judi Gerber
Webmaster: Barbara Barker

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown



Sydne Morrison and Elizabeth Lanzer display their 50-year member certificates at the annual meeting.

League of Women Voters of Torrance Area News (cont'd)

Thank You to the 2008-09 Board of Directors *By Past President Barbara Barker*

First Vice President in charge of Administration **Pat Kromka** has carried the Voter Service portfolio. Pat has dedicated herself to having the Smart Voter website meet its wonderful potential. She assists and urges candidates in getting their information onto the site so that voters can read the information before going to the polls. She also organized forums in several cities for every election.

Second Vice President in charge of Program **Sue Herbers** has served as Director of Government and Elections. Despite an extremely busy work schedule, Sue has attended almost every board meeting, keeping us informed on election issues and on the business of the Torrance City Council. Open Government Director **Dee Hardison** who served off board and kept us informed through Sue Herbers, is a wealth of information. She is another of our members who send out that "can I help with anything" email as events are starting up. **Judi Gerber** carried the off board portfolio for Public Libraries and relayed information through Sue to the Board.

Our Secretary **Kay White** took our minutes but that is certainly not all. She maintained a calendar and made us aware of all our due dates and commitments. She is truly the League's record keeper.

Treasurer **Sandra Strong** maintained all our financial records, paid our bills and kept track of our spending. She reported on our progress and worked with the Budget Committee. She also has been working with the financial development committee and has some great ideas for our future fundraising.

Our Advocacy Director **Lola Ungar** also handled the tasks related to Land Use, Housing, Public Relations and Redistricting. She is also the Advocacy Director for the LWV of Los Angeles County. Lola is our dynamo. She is everywhere doing everything.

Communications Director, **Sydne Morrison** is our rudder. She has served on the board for many years and League is in her blood. She has taken the responsibility for getting information out to our members who are not on email.

Membership Director **Venora Lee** has had a tough couple of years. The MGIK program sometimes felt like more of an illusion than the success it was. There were events to plan and extra tasks to handle in addition to keeping the membership records and preparing rosters for the members. She and the members of her committee, **Linda Brown, Lola Ungar, Eunice Hargrove, Barbara Barker** and **Celeste Bailey**, have put in a lot of effort over the last few years.

Natural Resources Director **Andrea Wagner** and her off-board directors, **Rick Wagner** who had the Energy portfolio, **Judi Gerber** who oversaw Water and Agriculture and **Briana Krank** who monitored Coastal Issues have been watchful of areas of interest to the League.

LaVonne Wuertz was our *Voter* Editor, bringing the honor of the 2009 LWVC Communications Award to our League. LaVonne takes all the information sent to her by the Board and other members and lays it out in her attractive newsletter. Then she searches websites at the County, State and National level for information

League of Women Voters Torrance Area News (cont'd)

Thank You *(Cont'd from p. 3)*

pertinent to the membership. She adds photos and graphics to complete the task. This all-in-one format has received praises throughout the State.

Tri-League Liaison **Linda Brown**, who has also served on the Membership Committee, kept the LWVUS data base updated and sorted through membership forms. For an off-board director, we certainly have seen lots more of Linda that expected. She is another of our members who is always there working behind the scenes. She also has the perfect home location with lots of parking and has been very generous to us in having meetings there.

Barbara Barker has served as the Health Care Director and Webmaster. She created and maintains a Board Members Guidebook for the Board and was a co-coordinator of the MGIK Team.

Mark Steffen who had the Education portfolio assisted the Board with issues related to the schools. His other duties, such as TUSD Trustee, caused him to resign but we appreciate his efforts.

Janice Steffen, who also resigned, had the Financial Development portfolio. She formed a committee to send letters to local businesses which brought in some donated funds. One of our new members, **Emma Simmons**, also has jumped in. She has contacted restaurants in the area to see who might help with a fund-raising event in the future so look for more on that later.

Carol Vernon Smith, although extremely busy with her professional commitments, has kept us informed on Mental Health issues.

The members of the Budget Committee, **Dorothy Stewart, Linda Brown, Venora Lee** and **Sandra Strong**; worked hard examining the League's budget and its actual expenses. They discussed the potential and put forth the 2009-2010 Budget, which was adopted at the Annual Meeting.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by **Celeste Bailey**, and including **Mary Lou Busch, Venora Lee, Lola Ungar** and **Eunice Hargrove** called most of the membership looking for new leadership to augment the Board. They brought forth a slate of officers who were elected at the Annual Meeting.



2008-09 Officers, Directors, Committee Members at the Annual Meeting
Standing from left: Dorothy Stewart, Sandra Strong, Venora Lee, Pat Kromka, Barbara Barker, Eunice Hargrove, Lola Ungar, Linda Brown, Dee Hardison. **Sitting:** LaVonne Wuertz and Sue Herbers.

League of Women Voters of Torrance News (cont'd)

Directors' Reports

Natural Resources—Andrea Wagner

A few local events of interest for the coming month are listed below for Saturday, June 27:

- "2nd Annual Venice Eco-Fest" at the Venice Recreation Area from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm. For more information visit: www.earthdayla.org
- "Are We Running Dry?" at the Torrance Library at 2:00 pm., film and speaker from the Metropolitan Water District. For more information contact Marilyn Lyon at 310-371-7222 or email her at marilyn@sbesc.com
- "Ocean Friendly Garden Workshop" at the El Segundo Joslyn Center from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for the first 65 registrants. Registration begins at 8:00 am. For more information and to register visit: www.sbesc.com

Legislation of note on the national scale is H.R. 2454, the "American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009" introduced by Representative Henry Waxman.

Social Policy—Barbara Barker

Health Care: We assisted with the health care workshop and caucus at the LWVC Convention in May. Health care reform in the state has been introduced by Senator Mark Leno as AB810. It is in suspense at this time. Meanwhile, the budget problems have led to suggestions of huge cuts in health and human services, as well as education (see below).

Nationally, there are several legislators and committees working on health care proposals. The LWVUS is supporting the efforts using broad criteria and not advocating any specific bills.

Currently it appears that, if there is a public option, it will be much like assigned insurance, with the government paying the premiums for those who cannot afford private insurance, and that there will not be a single payer type option. The bills will be introduced this summer and the intent is that a plan will be adopted by October.

Education: Dr. George Mannon provided a very interesting program at the LWVTA Annual Meeting. The school districts are all distressed with the impending budget cuts, on top of those that have already been imposed. He noted that local school districts

no longer have control of their own system because more than 80% of the money comes from the State, along with mandates.

Working Party for Children: At the May meeting, pending legislation that affects children and families includes the following:

AB 1349 (Torlakson) - After School Education and Safety Program Reduction

AB 769 (Torres) - State Preschool: Juvenile System Parent

SBXXX 25 (Cox) - First 5 Abolishment: Subject to approval by the voters, this bill would abolish the state and county First 5 Commissions

AB 597 (Liu) - Makes changes in state law relative to child welfare services to conform to Public Law 110-3511, to take advantage of potential additional federal funding available through that law, and to clarify the application of federal law in the state.

AB 12 (Beall, Bass) - California Fostering Connections to Success Act: Opts California into new federal laws that allow for federal financial participation in kinship-guardianship assistance payments, beginning 1/1/10, and transitional foster care services for eligible youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years old, beginning 10/1/10.

SB 114 (Liu) - Would require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to deem eligible for and ensure that there is no interruption in Medi-Cal coverage for an independent foster care adolescent that was in foster care on his or her eighteenth birthday.

AB 1393 (Skinner) - Foster Youth: Requests the California Community

(Cont'd on p. 6, Working Party)

League of Women Voters of Torrance News (cont'd)

Working Party *(Cont'd from p. 5)*

Colleges and University of California, and requires the California State University, in order to ensure stable housing for current and former foster youth, to give priority for campus housing to current and former foster youth.

Jean recommended that WPC members review the California Budget Project's (cbp.org) recent report analyzing effects of the federal stimulus package on California programs: "What Does the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Mean for California?" Among highlights given is that California could receive "nearly \$18 billion in temporary increases in federal funding designed to help states balance their budgets. This includes a temporary \$11.2 billion increase in funds for Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California); \$4.9 billion in education block grant funds for K-12 and higher education; and \$1.1 billion in flexible block grant funds for education and other purposes."

Joanne Leavitt also recommends the Promising Practices Network website (promisingpractices.net) as a reliable source for information about early childhood issues and programs.

Contributing to this report: Barbara Barker and minutes from the Working Party for Children from Jean Thompson, LWVLA.

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 of Women Voters of 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 come to consensus.

TRI-LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS BEACH CITIES – PALOS VERDES – TORRANCE

Invites You to Our Summer Meeting

TOUR AND LUNCH

WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT TREATMENT FACILITY



**THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2009
11:00 A.M.**

**WHERE: TREATMENT FACILITY
1935 HUGHES WAY
(OFF SEPULVEDA)
EL SEGUNDO**

**RSVP
PEGGY BARTLETT
310-545-1087
LINDA BROWN
310-320-3815**

(Reservations in by July 2, 2009)

League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County News

**2009 ANNUAL SUMMER LEAGUE DAY
POPOVERS IN PASADENA**

Women's City Club
160 North Oakland, Pasadena
Parking in rear off N. Madison Avenue,
1-1/2 blocks north of Colorado Blvd.

**Saturday, July 25, 2009
9:30 AM to 2 PM
Salad Luncheon**

WORKSHOPS
Presidents
Education
Redistricting
Natural Resources

SPEAKER



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SHERIFF LEE BACA**



Please send form and check payable to **LWV/LAC**
Mail to **LWV/LAC Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut Ave., Burbank 91501**

League Name _____

Attendee Name(s) _____

Deadline is July 13, 2009

Reservations # _____ @\$25.00 Total enclosed \$ _____

If postmarked after July 13th

Reservations # _____ @\$30.00 Total enclosed \$ _____

Chicken Salad Luncheon # _____ Vegetarian Luncheon # _____ W/O NUTS or other allergens # _____
(name food)

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR A MORNING WORKSHOP

Presidents # _____ Education # _____ Redistricting # _____ Nat . Resources # _____

League of Women Voters of California News from the LWVC website

Secretary of State Debra Bowen Honors League of Women Voters for Voter Education and Outreach

(June 1, 2009 Press Release Excerpts)

Sacramento, CA - The League of Women Voters of California was recently honored with the Medallion Award from the National Association of Secretaries of State. The award recognizes outstanding efforts in nonpartisan voter education and outreach for the 2008 election year.



California Secretary of State Debra Bowen presented the award on May 16 during the state League's biennial convention in Long Beach, California. "The League's long-standing leadership in strengthening democracy makes it deserving of this NASS Medallion honor," said Bowen, California's chief elections officer.

The NASS Medallion Award allows individual secretaries of state to recognize outstanding service and dedication to furthering the mission of the National Association of Secretaries of State within the states.

The NASS Medallion Program honors individuals, groups, or organizations with an established record of promoting the goals of NASS in one or more of the following areas:

- Elections, with special emphasis on voter education and participation
- Civic education, including the teaching, promotion, and study of this subject
- Service to state government—specifically, as it

relates to the duties of the office of the secretary of state.

For more information on NASS please visit www.nass.org.

Organizations that received this award from the California Secretary of State are:

Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA)

California State Student Association (CSSA)

University of California Student Association (USCA)

California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV)

Redistricting

The League is forming a Redistricting Committee comprised of League volunteers who will work with our Prop 11 partners to facilitate the best possible implementation of redistricting reform for California. We are looking at a variety of opportunities over the next three years and we need a wide array of talent and enthusiasm. To help develop materials that explain the Commission process and why citizens should care about it, we need members with experience in researching and writing basic educational materials

If you've participated in League studies, written presentations, or developed audio/visual materials, we certainly can use your skills. If you've been a part of your League's Speakers Bureau, done public speaking in any field, enjoy reaching out to your community, we can certainly use those skills. If you've had experience in reading, evaluating, or writing regulations for government agencies, we most definitely need those skills. If you've been a League Observer, or would like to learn how to be one, we need you to attend an occasional public meeting and report back. If you're on Facebook or MySpace, or blog, or are thinking about it, then we need you to help us inform the public.

This is an incredible opportunity to get involved in making history. And the League is the place for this kind of hands-on work. Contact our government director right away to express your interest in being considered for this project.

League of Women Voters of the United States News

Supreme Court Upholds Voting Rights Act

(June 22, 2009 LWVUS Press Release)

Washington, DC – The U.S. Supreme Court today issued a decision in one of the biggest election law cases before the nation's highest court since *Bush v. Gore*. "The 8-1 opinion in the case *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number one (NAMUDN) v. Mukasey* represents a vital vindication for the voting rights of all citizens in this country," said national League President, Mary G. Wilson.

The case concerned the requirement in Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) that certain state and local governments, mostly in the South, must obtain permission, or "preclearance," from the Justice Department or a federal court before making changes that affect voting.

"Today, the Court left the critical elements of the VRA untouched, and allowed jurisdictions covered by Section 5 – including the utility in this case -- to be able to apply to "bail out" or get out from under the requirements of the VRA if they demonstrate a history of correct and legal action," said Wilson.

"The League is pleased with today's decision, which leaves the VRA as it was meant to be – and as our country needs it to be," Wilson stated. "The VRA remains our best tool to combat racial and ethnic discrimination in the voting process," she said.

"With this decision, the basic structure of the VRA is intact," concluded Wilson. "The Court recognized the importance of the bail-out provisions and extended them to all jurisdictions. With a strong majority opinion, the basic importance and relevance of the VRA has been vindicated."



GoodSearch.com Raises Funds for the League

Search the Web Using GoodSearch.com and Raise Funds for the League!

Earn money to support the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) every time you search the web! Just log onto www.goodsearch.com, designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund – LWV (Washington, DC) as your charity of choice, and start using GoodSearch as your primary search engine. Each time you search, a donation will automatically go to the LWVEF. GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get the same high quality search results you're used to. This search engine donates 50 percent of its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to designated charities.

(From the LWVUS May Leaders' Update)

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 \$60

Household \$90

Student \$30

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

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

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

State: ca.lwv.org

County: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org

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

2009 Calendar

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 13, 10-2 pm | Online LWVUS Virtual Council. Contact Barbara Barker to participate |
| June 27, 10-1:30 pm | Old/new board meeting, home of Lola Ungar, potluck lunch |
| July 9, 11 am | Tri-League Go-See Tour: West Basin Municipal Water District, El Segundo. See p. 6 for details. RSVP Linda Brown |
| July 25, 9:30-2 pm | Popovers in Pasadena. See p. 7 for details. |
| Aug. 6, 7-9 pm | Board Meeting (Call for location) |
| Sept. 3, 7-9 pm | Board Meeting (Call for location) |
| Sept. 26 | Tri-League Kick-off. Details later. |

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

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Time Dated