



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

LWVTA Voter

<http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org>
 Tel. 310-618-8711

November 2009

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of 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.

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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 wuertzvoter@earthlink.net before the first weekend of each month. The editor is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information reported.

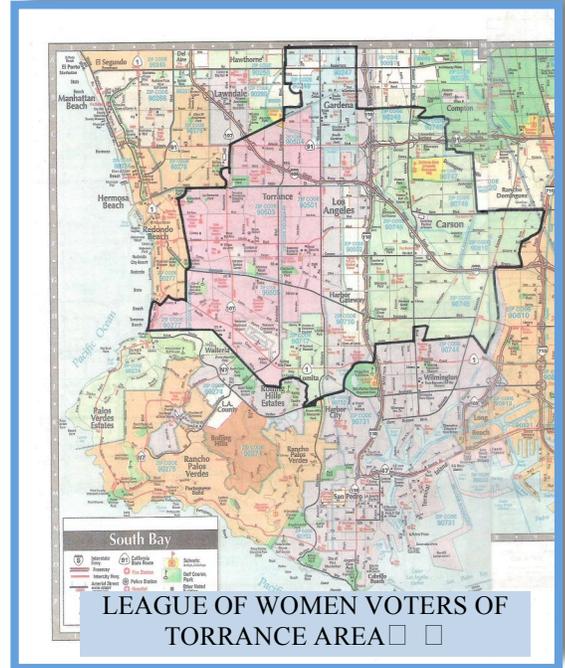
Editor: LaVonne Wuertz

Presidents' Message

We Have a New Name! Linda and I have some very good news to report as we approach the holiday season.

Effective October 24, 2009, LWVUS granted us permission to change our name to the **League of Women Voters of Torrance Area!**

Both they and LWVC (state League) officially established that our League represents the cities of Carson, Gardena, Lomita, Harbor City and Torrance. (See the map at right). They "agreed with the state League board that this change in your name will be more inclusive and better reflect the area you serve. We hope that this change allows for greater visibility as well as enhanced membership recruitment and fundraising opportunities."



Holiday Potluck Party & Program Planning. Let's celebrate our new name and the upcoming holidays by bringing your favorite dish and prepare yourself for a lively discussion about proposed County and National Program Planning ideas on Thursday, December 3rd, at 6:30 PM at my home at 3903 Bluff Street, Torrance. I will prepare an entrée. What will you bring? We will be sending out a list of all members and ask you to let us know what you propose to bring.

Health Care Bill, Including a Public Option. This month, be sure to write and call Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein and other senators to support Healthcare that includes a public option. Write to people like Senator Joseph Lieberman and other naysayers who are unreasonable and scaring the public.

Lola and Linda

Lola Ungar & Linda Brown, Co-Presidents

League of Women Voters of Torrance Area News

Education Report

By Gerry Rische and Tom Rische

Torrance School Board Election. Incumbents Al Muratsuchi (5,714 votes) and Mark Steffen (5,565) were re-elected to the Torrance Unified School District Tuesday night, while businessman Michael Wermers (4,554) took the third spot formerly held by Michael Ernst, who didn't seek re-election. Kathleen Wood, the only woman on the ballot, finished fourth (2,806) ahead of G. Rick Marshall (2,741), Kevin Bellenfant (who dropped out of the race earlier but received 1,182 votes), and Sameer "Supreme Sam" Bhavanni, who received 483. Some 7,500 people voted.

President Obama continues to seek more teacher accountability and charter schools, advocated by Education Secretary Arne Duncan. "There's no excuse for mediocrity," he said, and failing schools "should be shut down."

Limiting Studies of Education... interesting thought forwarded from Kansas LWV President Ernestine Krehbiel (lwvk@sbcglobal.net / lwvk.org.) It would narrow the topic and seems more manageable.

"Rather than tackle the study of ALL of education in all the states and local school districts, let's both study and take action about the extent of civic education and level of civic literacy (illiteracy) in our schools and in our adult population.

Throughout the nation, civic education time in the curriculum has been cut or dropped completely (usually leaving one semester of government in high school) as teachers' jobs are on the line for math and reading tests. No penalty happens to schools or school districts if all of their students are as ignorant as those who appear on Jay Leno's Jaywalking segment. But \$\$ disappear and jobs are lost if they don't meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) in the areas tested.

A recent poll by USA Today showed that 47% of the American public do not know what the three branches of our government are. Are the students, having gone through 8 years of No Child Left Behind with testing in reading and math with little to no civic education, going to do any better than this? I doubt it.

The League has a particular interest in making sure that children AND adults have the ability to be thinking

[Cont'd on p. 3, Education]

Board of Directors 2009-10

President of Record: Lola Ungar*
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Membership: Linda Brown
Natural Resources: Andrea Wagner
Public Relations: Lola Ungar
Speakers Bureau/Pros & Cons: Emma Simmons
Voter Editor: LaVonne Wuertz*
Voter Service/Smart Voter: Pat Kromka*

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Coastal Issues: Andrea Wagner
Education/Social Policy: Tom Rische
Energy: Andrea Wagner
Financial Development: Sandra Strong
Health Care: Barbara Barker
Land Use: Lola Ungar
Mental Health: Carol Adams Smith
Open Government: Dee Hardison
Public Libraries: Judi Gerber
Water and Agriculture: Judi Gerber
Webmaster: Barbara Barker

Committees

Budget: Dorothy Stewart
Executive: Noted by asterisks
Nominating: Celeste Bailey

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown



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

Education *[Cont'd from p. 2]*

participating citizens. All, no matter their careers, will be participating in this society and its good governance or lack there of.

Proposing that we tackle a study of the extent of Civic education in our schools nation wide and actively pushing for greater education in this field would be truly basic to the mission of the League.

I also think an action element that we should tackle is to try to promote civic education in adults.

Both retired Supreme Ct. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and actor Richard Dreyfuss have started foundations to promote better civic education. Why not coordinate with them and others to put on PSA's in the middle of ESPN or Sunday Night football games that are similar to the School House Rock of years ago? Even pay for their playing during prime time or the morning shows.

When one sees that stats indicate that we are losing 30% or more of students who don't graduate from high school, we know that with no earlier civic education before the senior year, these will be functionally illiterate about our system of government. Nonetheless they will have a voice and a vote.

(But you don't have to be young to be ignorant on basic government facts. Hence the white haired lady on Medicare shouting at a Tea Party that she wanted government to stay out of her health care.)

In short. Rather than tackle the study of ALL of education in all the states, let's both study and take action on civic literacy. Basic facts. Not right wing or left wing understanding of whether the government should lean on the 10th Amendment and leave things to the states or lean on the Elastic Clause that expands the power of the federal government to "do what is necessary and proper" to carry out the other limited powers listed in Article I, Sec. 8 (and the Preamble).

We can partner with the foundations mentioned above and others and I'm sure get famous faces for free to be in 30 sec.

spots. Even re-play for kids AND adults the School House Rock with "I'm Just a Bill, I'm only a Bill, Sitting Here on Capitol Hill".

Health Report

By Barbara Barker

At the LWVUS level, League of Women Voters National President Mary G. Wilson praised the U.S. House of Representatives for passing the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962).

"The House moved America closer to realizing true health care reforms this weekend by passing this legislation," said Wilson. "We now have a set of real reforms that provides comprehensive coverage and includes a public insurance option, which we believe is key to ensuring choice and controlling costs."

"The League was profoundly disappointed, however, in passage of the Stupak-Pitts amendment, which not only prohibits abortion coverage in the government-run plan but prevents any private plan from offering abortion coverage to plan participants if even just one individual in that plan uses government subsidies," Wilson stated. "It is our hope that the Senate will do the right thing and pass health care reform legislation without such language and with a strong public option."

On the State level, we are waiting for the efforts to grow on the California One campaign and to see how state efforts might dovetail with the national plan when it is finally passed.

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

Natural Resources

By Andrea Wagner

Reports from the 350 events held on October 24 indicate broad international participation. The local event held at Manhattan Beach pier drew a sizable crowd, increased awareness of climate change concerns, and received good media coverage. The local 350 event focused on a new tide line likely if global warming is not reversed soon.

Coming events of interest:

November 4, 18, 7:00 PM - 9:00 p.m. Anza Elementary School, Cafeteria, 21400 Ellinwood Drive, Torrance. Torrance Community Workshop to solicit input from residents and stakeholders regarding the City's Stormwater Basin Enhancement Program, Ocean Basin. The City has completed conceptual designs for converting the Ocean Basin into a natural open space ideal for walking.

November 19, 5:30 p.m. Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center, Room 122 ABC, 3 Civic Plaza Drive, Carson. Energy Efficiency 101 for residents in the City of Carson - Green Building Tips and Water Conservation.

December 5, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance. Join in planting shrubs and grasses to celebrate Arbor Day 3.

Open Government

By Dee Hardison

The independent Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) was created in 2008 by the House of Representatives to increase transparency and accountability in the House ethics process. OCE released their 3rd quarter report that stated the House Ethics Committee had until October 30, 2009, to empanel investigative subcommittees or release reports compiled by OCE on ethics questions raised about members of the House. Government reform advocate groups including the U.S. League of Women Voters praised the expected release of these documents.

Three local House members: Jane Harman (El Segundo), Laura Richardson (Long Beach) and Maxine Waters (Los Angeles) were among dozens who came under review from the House Ethics Committee. In all cases, there has been no finding that the member violated standards of conduct.

Speakers Bureau Report

By Emma Simmons

Emma Simmons attended the 14th Annual First Amendment Free Speech and Open Government Assembly on October 24, 2009, at Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, CA. It was a unique, day-long conference on First Amendment rights: a series of talks and panels on journalism, technology, law and public policy from the perspective of freedom of speech and freedom of information.

A highlight of the conference was the panel discussion, "**Twitter with Care: Journalists and Social Media.**" The panel consisted of prominent Southern California media attorney Kelli Sager, Los Angeles Times attorney Karlene Goller, Assistant Managing Editor of the Los Angeles Times Henry Fuhrmann, and Melissa Griffin, San Francisco-based blogger and political analyst. Sager suggested that journalists put nothing up on social media that they wouldn't put in newspapers or broadcast since you create a public record when you go on Facebook or Twitter. "It's not private," she said. "It is easy to find even if you try to restrict access." Sager cited recent suits resulting from careless postings....In conclusion, it was emphasized that rational, responsible reporting practices will protect journalists (and anyone else) in the brave new world

[Cont'd on p.8, Speakers]

Leagues of Women Voters of Torrance Area and Los Angeles County

LWVTA and the November Election

LWV Torrance Area co-hosted two candidate forums for the November 3 election—one for the Torrance Unified School District Board and one for the



Lomita City Council election. Both were well attended with about sixty in the TUSD election

audience and a full house for the Lomita meeting. Voter turnout



Moderator Frances Talbot-White and TUSD candidates Muratsuchi, Steffen, Marshall and Wermers [Photos by Dorothy Stewart]

was very low for both elections. See the Education Report for TUSD election results. Tim King and James Gazeley placed first and second in the Lomita election. A tie for the third open spot resulted in a recount with Margaret Estrada winning the third seat by only three votes.

Dee Hardison Honored

In recognition of her outstanding years of service to the community, Dee Hardison and her family and close to 200 others, including about 20 League members, gathered at Wilson Park in Torrance



Honoree Dee Hardison is joined by League members Barbara Barker and Lola Ungar on her right and Pat Kromka and Linda Brown on her left. [Photo courtesy of Barbara Barker]

November 12 for a City ceremony renaming the Wilson Park sports complex The Dee Hardison Sports Center. Dee has long been and continues to be active in organizations concerned with the wellbeing of the city and its citizens. She is a long-time League member, former Torrance commissioner, council member, and mayor and currently serves on the rose float and sister city commissions and on

the board of the Torrance Pediatric Therapy Network. The sports center was built during her tenure as mayor.

350 Action

Several League members went to the 350 Action event at Manhattan Beach on October 24, part of a worldwide effort to raise awareness



of the global warming threat. Torrance League member and Councilman Cliff Numark was there as well and spoke to the very large crowd that gathered on the beach. Pictured here are League member Ruth Nadel and friend. [Photo courtesy of Kay White.]

Reminder!

**Holiday Potluck
Thursday, Dec. 3rd**

Save the Date...

Gangs of Los Angeles County / A Look at LA's Street Gangs

Do you know where the street gangs are in L.A. County? Learn who and where they are in your local area and meet the people who focus on them. Wait until you see the map! Save **Saturday, January 30th** on your calendar for this special L.A. County Winter Workshop at the LWV Los Angeles offices new location (Berendo & Wilshire Blvd.) that will include two separate panels representing all sides of the issue and a special keynote speaker. A flyer will be forthcoming when we get all the necessary details.

League of Women Voters of California News

Issues for Emphasis

The California League of Women Voters has two specific issues selected for emphasis for the period of July 1, 2009 through 2011. They are Redistricting Implementation and Government Reform.

1. Redistricting Implementation - According to the current timeline, the proposed regulations for the Citizens Redistricting Commission should take effect on November 16, 2009. The application process for commissioners should be initiated by the State Auditor by January 1, 2010.

2. Government Reform

A. In early September, Assembly Speaker Bass and Senate President Pro Tem Steinberg announced a Joint Selection Committee on Reform. This committee is tasked with:

- Making government more efficient and accountable
- Prioritizing key issues so government makes tough decisions
- Cutting through gridlock caused by outmoded rules and undue partisanship
- Making government more transparent and accessible around the State
- Diminishing the influence of special interests
- Making government more customer friendly
- Creating a process that encourages long-term thinking, not short-term band-aids

B. A conference was held on October 14, 2009 in Sacramento sponsored by Institute of Government Studies, University of California, Berkeley, the Bill Lane Center of American West, Stanford University and the Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento.

The conference discussed the advantages and drawbacks of the various paths to reform:

Individual amendments, a constitutional revision commission or a constitutional convention

The conference included obstacles to reform and the next steps necessary for achievements.

Dee Hardison



Every car counts!

Donate your car, truck, motorcycle, RV or boat to the League of Women Voters.

Call 800 320.0476

League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

We'll pick it up. You'll support the League, get a tax deduction and avoid the headache of disposing of an unwanted vehicle.



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 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 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.

League of Women Voters of the United States News

LWVUS on Climate Change

The evidence is clear that human-induced climate change is underway.

The emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases—primarily by the burning of fossil fuels—has increased the blanket of heat-trapping gases in Earth's atmosphere. Global temperatures have risen approximately 0.8°C (1.4°F) above pre-industrial levels, and this small increase is already causing significant adverse effects. These effects—documented by the world's leading climate scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—include rising sea levels, intensified storms, higher global temperatures, and severe droughts and floods that are already having adverse impacts on human health, food supplies, and ecosystems, as well as national economies.

The United States must adopt an aggressive trajectory for reducing its emissions.

The United States must stop the “Business as Usual” emissions of greenhouse gases and impose aggressive emission reductions starting in 2010. We support adoption by the U.S. of a firm, verifiable cap that reduces emissions at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. Even with these aggressive reductions in the U.S., the global decrease in emissions may lag... resulting in dangerous warming. Furthermore, part of the emitted CO₂ remains and accumulates in the atmosphere; thus, the atmospheric concentration will continue to increase until the global rate of removal exceeds the rate of release.

We have the capacity, responsibility and economic imperative to lead this effort internationally.

The U.S. has met great challenges before—such as World War II and space exploration. Since we are responsible for much of the increase in

greenhouse gases, we need to accept responsibility for being the leader in solving the global climate challenge. Our efforts will transform our way of life by creating a new clean-energy economy and will allow the U.S. to maintain its technological leadership.

[The entire text is available on the LWVUS website. To view click on Take Action, then Global Climate Change, then LWVUS Fact Sheet....]

Speakers *[Cont'd from p. 4]*

of the social media. The need for diligence in authenticating sources and information was stressed. A reporter or any online user can't assume an online source is using a real name. Neither can one assume that a story circulating through blogs is true. Due diligence is in order.

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 Area
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>

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.

2009-10 Calendar

Nov. 3	Election Day
Nov. 5, 7-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
Dec.	NO <i>LWVTA VOTER</i> in December
Dec. 3, 6:30 pm	Board Meeting and Holiday Potluck, Lola Ungar's home
Jan. 7, 7-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
Jan. 30	County Winter League Day (on LA gangs) (LWV offices, Berendo and Wilshire, details later)
Feb. 4, 7 pm-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
Feb. 14, 2-4 pm	Chocolate Sunday, Linda Brown's home
Feb. 25	Tri-League Lasagna Dinner, Katy Giessert Library Meeting Room

Happy Holidays!



League of Women Voters of Torrance Area

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