



The Beach Voter

League of Women Voters Beach Cities
Serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach & Redondo Beach

TRI-LEAGUE SPRING MEETING

U.S. Representative Janice Hahn will be the featured speaker at this year's Tri-League Spring Meeting on Saturday, March 16th from 9:30am to noon at the Buffalo Fire Station in Torrance. She will speak on "A Newcomer's Perspective." The cost is \$26 per person (\$30 after March 9th) and includes brunch. A flyer is included with this newsletter.

APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Health Care Forum on the Affordable Care Act (AKA Obama Care)

Tuesday, April 23, 7:00 – 8:30 PM, location to be determined
Free and open to the public

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities is co-sponsoring the forum with the Beach Cities Health District and the Manhattan Beach Senior Resource Committee. A panel of experts will provide an overview of the Affordable Care Act and how it is being implemented in California. Confirmed speakers are Dr. Gerald Kominski, Director, Center for Health Policy Research at UCLA and Robin Camrin, Vice President, Medical Staff Services/Performance Improvement at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. We will be inviting more panelists.

Harriet Chase
Social Policy Chair

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The League affirms our belief in our commitment to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. The League recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

<p>The Beach Voter</p> <p>Co-Presidents: Barbara Arlow Janelle Freeman</p> <p>Editor: Ruth Hart</p> <p>Copy Editor: Barbara Arlow</p> <p>Production: Mignon Thiem-Murphy Peggy Bartlett Susan Grebe Sunhee Park</p> <p>Labels: Ann Martin</p>

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

To become a member: Send check in the amount of \$55.00 (payable to the League of Women Voters Beach Cities) to Susan Grebe at 629 19th Street, Manhattan Beach CA 90266.

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address:

Thank you to all our generous members who have contributed to the Non-Event.

Wanda Arcos
Joan Arias
Barbara Arlow
Cecilia Ball
Peggy Bartlett
Dr. Mary Lou Brenneman
Kathy Campbell
Paulette Caudill
Harriet Chase
Irma Cohen
Marilyn Dubas
June Eicker
Susan Grebe
Marion Greenman
Ruth Hart
Janis Hirohama
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Jim Pollard
Doris Rosenberg
Bea Savellano
Annabelle Sims
James Stewart
Margaret Thelen
Carole Wagner Vallianos
April Halprin Wayland
Lance Widman
Maggie Wilkinson

Your donations are so appreciated. If you have not sent your check yet, not to worry, the event is still in progress and accepting all donations.

PROGRAM NOTES – Jan Nathanson

As we come to the halfway point in this League year, a brief review, words of appreciation and notes about future events are in order.

The year began with a kick-off breakfast at the Depot featuring a presentation about the Initiative and Referendum process. In October a panel of Barbara Arlow, Susan Grebe and Margaret Thelen covered the rationale and details of ballot measures, which the LWVC supported, opposed or remained neutral. Thank you to the panel for helping members and guests "Vote with the League".

Consensus meetings were held in November and January on the Initiative and Referendum update, thanks to the assistance of Henrietta Mosley, Janelle Freeman and Jim Stewart. It was a demanding task, but resulted in consensus on most questions. State convention delegates will approve the updated position on this timely topic.

In February, Maggie Wilkinson and Wendy Phillips offered an overview of the proposed flood control plans, which may be on a future ballot if approved by the Board of Supervisors. Aided by a representative of the Regional Water Board and an aide to Supervisor Knabe, members were offered differing views of the issue. A recap of this meeting can be found on p. 5 of this Newsletter. Maggie and Wendy are dedicated to protecting the oceans under our environmental positions and we appreciate their efforts to inform us.

The Tri-LWV breakfast will be our March event. Please see the enclosed flyer for details.

Harriet Chase and her committee are planning an exciting, informative meeting on Health Care in April. Always a stellar event, we anticipate another major learning opportunity on a vital program priority. See the article on page 1 for more details.

All members are welcome to participate in studies. Any suggestions for future areas of interest are especially welcome, whether local, county, state or national concerns. Please call me at [310-643-6247](tel:310-643-6247) or email rjnathanson@yahoo.com.

AES POWER PLANT FORUM REPORT

Note: The following has been excerpted from Paul Silva's article in *The Beach Reporter*, posted online on January 31, 2013. The complete story can be found at

http://tbrnews.com/news/redondo_beach/measure-a-forum-focuses-on-power-pollution-and-property-rights/article_e966e534-6bf0-11e2-8fd5-0019bb2963f4.html

Power, pollution and property rights were the hot topics Tuesday night at a voters forum on Measure A, the March 5 Redondo Beach ballot initiative to rezone the AES property on Harbor Drive.

A capacity crowd in the community room of the main library heard from proponents and opponents of the measure in a forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters. City Councilman Bill Brand and longtime activist Jim Light, co-authors of Measure A, squared off against AES Southland President Eric Pendergraft and City Councilman Matt Kilroy.

The two sides described dramatically different impacts of Measure A, which would ban power generation on the site and allow recreation and open space on 60 percent of the land and commercial development on the remaining 40 percent. AES has applied to the California Energy Commission for a new plant on the land, which has been the site of power generation for more than a century, because the current plant uses a "once-through" ocean water-cooling system that must be phased out.

The proponents touted it as the a way to rid the city of a polluting, blighted and unnecessary power plant that endangers residents' health and lowers property values while still providing substantial economic value to AES.

Opponents of the measure said it would drag Redondo into a costly legal battle by violating AES' property rights, potentially saddle the city with the cost of maintaining a large regional park and hamstringing the state's ability to meet its future power with cleaner technology.

"Yes on A is the strongest message we can send to state power authorities that have the final say," Brand said. "Without Measure A, we get a new, polluting power plant for 50 years. Measure A is good for harbor revitalization, good for city revenues, good for residents and good for AES."

Pendergraft painted a starkly different picture while he was showing a rendering of the new facility.

“It (the new plant) will be smaller, cleaner, quieter and more efficient,” he said. “It will dramatically improve the skyline, increasing property values and providing new ocean views to hundreds of residents.”

The forum included detailed discussions on how much pollution the new plant would create, whether the power was needed for grid reliability and whether the Measure A zoning was consistent with nearby harbor zoning, among other topics.

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING REPORT

Our February 26th Membership Meeting was on the Clean Water, Clean Beaches Measure proposed by the LA County Flood Control District. We had two guest speakers, Hector Bordas, an engineer at the LA County Public Works Dept. and Steve Napolitano, a member of LA County Supervisor Don Knabe’s staff.

Bordas presented information about the history of flooding in LA County and the formation of the County Flood Control District. In addition to controlling flood risk, federal and state laws and regulations have required the County to take on responsibilities for managing the quality of storm water. To fund storm water quality programs, the County is proposing the Clean Water, Clean Beaches Measure, which is a property fee. This funding would be allocated to both cities and the county for regional and local projects that would clean up storm water. And the County intends not only to improve water quality, but also to capture storm flows and infiltrate this storm water into underground basins. This cost effective method of storage would allow us to pump the water in the future, to augment our scarce local supplies of drinking water. Bordas reminded us of our heavy reliance on imported water from northern California, the Colorado River, and the eastern Sierra, which account for about 60% of our drinking water, and our need to optimize our local supplies of water, especially storm water.

Both speakers talked about the public hearing the Board of Supervisors had on the measure on Jan. 15th. About 2,000 people showed up and about 200 spoke. Steve Napolitano feels the property fee notice that the County staff mailed to property owners

(continued from p. 6)

did not make it obvious that it was an opportunity for a property owner to protest the measure. He said it looked like junk mail and, moreover, was sent during the holiday period. Napolitano also explained that Knabe is responding to many who feel the cost will be too burdensome for property owners such as schools, churches and non-profit organizations. He suggests that it is not fair for just property owners to bear this cost, since everyone contributes to storm water pollution.

Knabe is encouraging property owners to protest the proposed measure by March 12, when the Board of Supervisors will again consider the proposed fee. Property owners can download an official protest form and locate their Assessor's Parcel Number on www.Knabe.com or call [\(800\) 218-0018](tel:8002180018) to request a duplicate copy. March 12th staff will again report to the County Board of Supervisors about the measure, and the public may also offer comments at this hearing.

In any case, it was an interesting meeting and thanks to all who participated and asked good questions.

WINTER LEAGUE DAY REPORT – Joan Arias

Los Angeles County League of Women Voters President Nancy Mahr welcomed the group, introduced League presidents and former presidents and opened the floor for announcements which included:

- State Program Planning reports are due in February
- The County Convention will be held on Saturday, March 30 at a location to be determined. Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe will speak to the group.
- A forum will present views of the AES Power Plant on Tuesday, January 29 at the Redondo Beach Main Library from 6:00-7:45 PM co-sponsored by the Redondo Beach Library and the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities.
- The County League needs a new secretary. They hold meetings on the first Wednesday of each month from 10AM-1PM (meeting days are negotiable) at various locations around the County.
- Claremont League completed a unit on fiscal policy. They recommend reviewing this unit as they found it most interesting.
- Claremont League will hold a fundraiser on Saturday February 9, 2-4PM at Padua Hills. Professor Dan Haley will speak on the challenges facing California.

Nancy reviewed some key facts about the California K-12 schools before introducing the table discussions:

- There are 957 public school districts in California serving 6.2 million students (500,000 students attend private schools and there are 912 charter schools)
- California schools have the highest percentage of English learners in the United States (25%)
- California ranks 49th nationally in spending per student at \$8,482; the national average is \$11,824. This figure does not take the 2013-14 budget into account; that spending will bring us to just under the national average.
- California ranks 50th nationally in number of students per teacher (23.6 is our average; the national average is 15.6)
- California ranks 39th in the percentage of personal income spent on K-12 education: \$37 out of every \$1000 of personal income (down from \$56 in 1972)
- In the 60's California was in the top national rankings.

Funding for K-12 education comes from:

- 55% state General Fund (Prop 98)
- 22% local property taxes (Prop 98 allocation to the schools by the state)
- 13% federal government (mostly categorical funds - for specific groups such as gifted, English learners and such)
- 8.4% miscellaneous local sources (donations, parcel taxes)
- 1.6% state lottery

Nancy pointed out that public education has lived through constant budget crises throughout the years for a number of reasons: less money for the schools, a percentage of a smaller "pie," erosion of the funding base. Schools have responded in various ways: reduced number of days of school, increased class sizes, elimination of elective classes and personnel (art, music, summer school, librarians, district administrators, counselors). They also deferred maintenance. The Community Colleges were really hit and responded by increasing the cost of classes from \$11 a unit in 2000. They are now authorized to go up to \$36 per unit but have not reached that amount yet. The new budget anticipates spending \$4.7 billion more per year based on Propositions 30 and 39 but this is still lower than the 2007-2008 spending. Nancy emphasized the need to look at future years to identify funding.

The table questions for discussion included:

- Method of allocating funding to schools (funding weighted toward low income areas; base funding)
- Teacher/school evaluations
- Government plan for improving adult education
- K-12/Community Colleges for remedial education
- UC/Cal State and budget - what role should online education play
- Use of block grants vs. categorical grants (made to specific groups)

The Beach Cities group discussed a question on whether school funds should be used for armed officers on campus to protect the children (we voiced a resounding NO to this, feeling that the money should be used for better purposes such as mental health programs and improved communications for school security). We also discussed whether the Governor's education finance plan should be part of the budget process bypassing the legislative committees or should it go through policy committee hearings. Understanding the complexities and possible delays caused by policy committee hearings, we felt that the process should be a joint effort with the Legislature.

Following lunch, we enjoyed a lively and stimulating talk by Dr. Lawrence Picus, Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professor of Education Finance and Policy at the USC Rossier School of Education. He introduced himself as the son of a former Los Angeles City Council member and long-time, committed League of Women Voters member. He introduced the topic by saying that school finance is like a Russian novel: it is long, has many characters, boring and in the end everyone dies!

He agreed with the League's focus point and noted that the numbers change every day in school finance, that it is a tremendously changing environment. He asked us to consider the questions:

- Is a budget cut an actual cut in funds or a cut in what was requested for a particular period?
- What do schools do when there is less money than they need?
- What should schools do with more money?

He noted that test scores continue to rise despite the fact that there are many gaps such as scores among the economically deprived, Hispanics, No-Child-Left-Behind programs and other specific groups. But test scores are up and thanks to Proposition 30 we now have some flexibility. Proposition 30 ensured there would be no added budget cuts this year; it gives us flexibility for the future. But he reminded us that many other areas were cut especially in social services, and those groups want and need help.

He discussed weighted resources as proposed by the Governor and pointed out that they have been around for a long time. The best way to handle weighting is to count the special services needed and weight them as double. For example - if a child needs special education, s/he should be counted as 2; the same applies to limited English and economically deprived children. Additional monies based on special circumstances should be allocated. As well, if the number of children with such needs goes above 50%, you might allocate more funding. The big question is how to use the money.

Some people feel we should use the money in the first years to pay back what was taken away in the past years without changing weighting formulas. These weighting formulas would be phased in over five years. He challenged us to think about whether this should play out as a budget debate or a policy debate and how should the debate be held, noting that on the positive side, we are doing this at a slow pace.

In answering the question of what school districts usually do with more money, he noted: smaller, more elective classes (there are mixed statistics on the value of smaller classes) as well as paying teachers more. We have a historic opportunity now to encourage schools to do different things. He noted that we might look at things that work:

- core, small classes (the core being math, English, science, Social Studies and world languages)
- a lot of support for students who need help
- summer school and extended days
- more support for teachers with coaches to help teachers improve
- administrative and operations support
- teacher time for collaboration

Picus emphasized that we should not try to rebuild what wasn't working in 2007; we should encourage schools to try different things with weighted formulas.

When asked about charter schools, he felt that the charter schools give LA the opportunity to help LA Unified "break itself up" and eliminate many of the long-time problems. He also noted that as there are more and more charter schools, there would be a "regression to the mean." This means that as charter schools proliferate, they will tend to be closer to the average on measurements. But he did emphasize that this is a great opportunity for LA Unified to self-correct! He noted that Charter Schools are no panacea but may help with some of the administrative issues in LA Unified. He pointed out that systems are never perfect; that you cannot legislate perfection. He asked how much regulation can we tolerate or impose.

All in all, we enjoyed a stimulating day with a great deal to discuss and consider.

SAVE THE DATE – ANNUAL MEETING

LWVBC will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, May 11th at the home of Joan Arias, 720 8th Street, Hermosa Beach. Additional details will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

Materials for this meeting will be sent via email to all members who have email. Members without email addresses will receive materials via US Mail.

51st ANNUAL COUNTY CONVENTION

This year's County Convention will be held on Saturday, March 30th at the Rio Hondo Events Center in Downey. County Supervisor Don Knabe will speak on "Insights into County Government 2013." A flyer is included with this newsletter.

Beach Voter		CALENDAR		Mar/Apr 13
Date	Time	Subject	Place	
Tuesday March 12	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Joann Kennelly 1338 W. 159 th Street Gardena	
Saturday March 16	9:30 am – noon	Tri-League Spring Meeting	Buffalo Fire Station 1261 Cabrillo Avenue Torrance	
Saturday March 30	9:00 am - noon	51 st Annual County Convention	Rio Hondo Event Center 10627 Old River School Road Downey	
Tuesday April 9	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Jan Nathanson	
Tuesday April 23	7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	Membership Meeting: Affordable Care Act	TBD	
Saturday May 11	TBD	Annual Meeting	Home of Joan Arias 720 8 th Street Hermosa Beach	



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