



The Beach Voter

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

ANNUAL KICKOFF MEETING

Saturday, September 7, 2013

9:00 am – 11:30 am

H.T. Grill

1701 S. Catalina Avenue

Redondo Beach

Every September, the League of Women Voters chapters from Beach Cities, Torrance, and Palos Verdes Peninsula hold a joint meeting to kick off the League year. This year's meeting will be held on Saturday, September 7th from 9:00 am to 11:30 am, at H.T. Grill in Riviera Village. Our speaker will be Willie J. Hagan, who was recently named President of CSU Dominguez Hills. He will speak on Higher Education and the California Master Plan for Higher Education. A registration flyer is included with this newsletter. The cost is \$25 before August 31st, \$30 after August 31st.

OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our October membership meeting will be held on October 22 between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Manhattan Beach Community Church at 303 S. Peck Ave in Manhattan Beach. Parking is accessible behind the church on Rowell Avenue at the corner of Voorhees.

Our topic for the meeting is water as it relates to the national LWV study on agriculture. Our guest speaker will be Ron Wildermuth, Public and Governmental Affairs Manager at West Basin Municipal Water District. Ron will explain to us the role water plays in our lives and as it relates to our agriculture study. As a West Basin Manager, Ron is committed to water, to its reliability, quality, availability, its financial management and to its environment. He is known as an expert in his field, and is also a very entertaining speaker.

Plan to attend the meeting to learn about the issues related to water and what we all can do to help maintain the water resources we have.

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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.

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.

<p>The Beach Voter</p> <p>President: Barbara Arlow</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>

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:

LWVC State Convention Report – Janelle Freeman

The 2013 LWVC State Convention was held in a somewhat secluded part of South San Jose. The Convention went very smoothly. The Parliamentarian was not put to a serious test until the final day when a couple of passionate groups of Leaguers were pushing for a not-recommended study of the state's higher education system (which eventually passed) and an "inappropriate" resolution (as deemed by the resolution committee) against internet voting (which failed).

The most exciting part of the Convention was that Beach Cities won an award for the Best Website for a Small League. Everyone should check it out (www.beachvoter.org) and let our webmaster, Janis Hirohama, know how much you appreciate having a great, and now award-winning, website. Another very exciting part was the election of one of our LWV Beach Cities members to the state board. Fatima Malik was elected to the board to head up Communications. Speaking of communications, one of the newer parts of the Convention was pauses allowing people to send out messages about the proceedings to their social media sites.

The usual source of contention at a convention, the budget, passed without comment. This was in spite of the "bold" process of budgeting items that may not get funded if donations and grants do not increase. President Jenny Waggoner explained that having our spending priorities in our officially approved budget would facilitate fund raising for those priorities. The budgeted income for LWVC and LWVCE is broken down as follows: 17% PMP, 24% Grants, 26% Donations, 13% Contract Services, 12% External Income (Guide To California Government, and SmartVoter Services), and 9% Development Revenue and Other. There was no increase in PMPs.

The new Initiative and Referendum position was approved and incorporated into the rest of the state positions, all of which were retained.

There were no board recommended studies this year, due in part to no topic standing out from the programming inputs submitted by local leagues. With a number of issues expected to be critical in the next couple of years, four topics (two primary, and two second tier/as resources allow) were recommended by the Board for Education and Advocacy and subsequently approved by the Convention. This is a larger number than usually put forward, which was expected to work with not having a study. These issues are 1) Money in Politics, 2) Education, 3) Health Care, and 4) Water. Only one of the suggested not-recommended studies went forth for consideration. That study was later amended to *a study of public higher education in California, which includes the Community College system, California State University system, and University of California System*; all of which are included in the California Master Plan for Higher Education. The study does not include private universities. It was a surprise to some of us to realize that we have no positions at the state or national level that apply to higher education. The lack of such a position keeps us from being able to comment on the choices that are made with respect to tuition, the number of out of state students, etc. A number of people at the convention committed to being on the study committee. The voting on this study was extremely close. A not-recommended study must pass by a three-fifths vote. First it lost by one vote, then a person who voted against it asked for a reconsideration, eventually the study

passed by two votes. One of the first tasks of the new study committee will be to find funding for the study. Studies are funded out of the Education Fund and cost approximately \$10,000 plus the cost of staff time, which may cost as much or more.

The new board slate was selected to include diversity of location, age, and gender. Jenny Waggoner was reelected as LWVC president. The VPs include Kathy Armstrong, Helen Hutchison for Program and Advocacy, and Kathy Souza for Voter Services. The secretary and treasurer are Ellen Wheeler and Eleanor Gonzalez, respectively. In addition to Fatima, the directors are Patrick Atwater, Sara Diefendorf, Mony Flores-Bauer, Kay Raga, Syeda Reshma Inmdar, and Beth Pitton-August.

During the opening session, Waggoner and Executive Director Melissa Breach discussed the LWV brand. It is valued more by those over 40, college educated, more affluent, and born in this country. If we want to reach other demographics, we need to address issues in those communities. Later, Cheryl Graeve from LWVUS urged us to continue to export ideas such as citizen redistricting to other states, and to participate in the National Voters Registration Day (9/25/13).

LWVC is updating its Guide to California Government. The last version from 1992 predated the availability of the world wide web. The new version will include more graphics and be more accessible to today's learners. Among other uses, the Guide can be used for fundraising. The print version is due out in August, followed by eBook version around January.

One speaker stood out as being particularly pertinent to our assembly. Ann M Ravel, chair of the California Fair Political Practices Commission, talked about how the Supreme Court changed the political financing landscape but did not change the California disclosure laws. She is convinced that disclosure could help the dwindling public trust in government. CFPPC recently brought the first SuperPAC expenditure coordination case. (SuperPACs are supposed to be independent expenditures committees, and not coordinate with campaigns.) They are also sponsoring legislation to increase disclosure and increase the enforcement ability. When it comes to local enforcement of campaign finance laws, the DAs defer cases to the FPPC, when they should be stepping up and bringing cases locally. The FPPC has been working to improve their on-line presence, and you can sign up for a mail list at www.fppc.ca.gov.

There were other good speakers that you may want to follow up on. Chris Hoene of the California Budget Project. You can find lots of good numbers on their website, www.cbp.org. Meghann Farnsworth from the Berkeley non-profit Center for Investigative Reporting (<http://cironline.org/>) spoke about the difficulty of being a non-profit news investigation organization in a shrinking market. The CIR works by getting grants and partnering with other organizations to do in depth research and reporting on topics. Former journalist, author, John McManus, PhD, spoke about how to tell if news is unbiased. He came up with the SMELL test: Source – who is providing the news; Motivation – Inform, Persuade, or Entertain; Evidence; Logic; what is Left out of the story. “As journalism goes, so goes democracy.” – Bill Moyers. Kim Klein, a fundraising consultant had some interesting observations, such as, if a people are not asked about their opinions, then they might not actually form one.

There were some good workshops. A couple of workshops had some takeaways that I can try to

capture in a few sentences.

Outreach – Syeda Reshma Inmander, Director LWVC, focused on lessons learned during the One Nation grant project. To reach out to communities that may be underrepresented in our political process or in our local leagues, it is good to identify organizations and people who can be emissaries to those communities and allies in promoting civic engagement. Many people are not aware of the LWV local leagues but are happy to work with them. Once the initial alliance is started, local leagues should focus on building relationships and continuing to communicate our mission. It is good to become aware of perspectives in certain communities – such as fear of government, or fear of taking anything that might come with an obligation. Generally it works to appeal to justice, fairness, and community involvement. The US Census website can be used as a tool for brainstorming.

Local Advocacy on State Issues – Hutchison, Trudy Schafer, Chris Carson – Some advice and important links from the workshop are

- Campaign Finance is being rebranded as Money in Politics
- Define your goal – What do you want to make happen?
- LWVC advocacy info <http://www.lwvc.org/act-now>
- Check out legislation status at <http://www.capitoltrack.com/>
- LWVC Resource directory <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/action.html>
- Let LWVC know if we are contacting local legislators. Ask for Help.
 - Speaking with one voice is the strength of the League
- Make connection with representative's staff at the local offices -
- If trying to contact Feinstein's office, call office in Fresno, not LA or SFB Area

And then there were the caucuses. One with lots of information was “Early Years are Learning Years.” This focused on learning from birth through 3rd grade. During her first three years, a child's brain develops 700 neural connections per second. By three there is a factor of two difference between the number of words known by an affluent child versus a low income child.

Another caucus with plans to be back again in two years to go after a study was “Putting a Price on Carbon Emissions.”

I hope this report gives you a flavor for the State Convention and inspires you to check out some of the websites. Thank you for allowing me to represent the Beach Cities at the convention. It was a great experience.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA CONVENTION 2013 COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

LWV Beach Cities is the proud recipient of the Communications Award for "... their outstanding Web site." Special thanks go to Janis Hirohama for maintaining our chapter's website. Check it out at www.beachvoter.org

2013-2014 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS – Jan Nathanson

At the summer retreat, members of the board of the LWV Beach Cities decided on the program priorities for this next League year. Fewer membership meetings limit us somewhat, but it appears to be an exciting, timely challenge for both program studies and action. We welcome all members to join us in becoming better informed on key topics and sharing your opinions during consensus meetings, this year on agriculture.

Priority issues include the agriculture update study, on the national level, with inclusion of water's role (see the article for the October 22nd meeting). Information on the agriculture update is now on the LWVUS website. The scope of the study is as follows:

The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on:

1. current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and
2. current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

Other issues for this year include education finance, including higher education and if time permits, money in politics, and voting rights .

MEMBER IN THE NEWS

Don Brann, League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities member, is the new Inglewood Unified School District Superintendent. Don was the former head of the Wiseburn School District and the interim superintendent of the San Gabriel Unified School District. Tom Torlakson, California Superintendent of Public Instruction, said his experience and judgment make him an ideal candidate to help Inglewood schools return to local control.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

LWVBC welcomes two new members this month: Ellen Rosenberg of Manhattan Beach and Nanette Barragan of Hermosa Beach.

Unfortunately, we are losing two of our most active (and youngest!) members. Our Co-President, Janelle Freeman, is moving to Texas. Her predecessor, Fatima Malik, has been elected to the State Board; although she will remain a member of our chapter, her service will be primarily directed at the state level. We wish both Janelle and Fatima well in their new endeavors and thank them both for their service to the Board.

POPOVERS IN PASADENA – Joan Arias

Los Angeles County League of Women Voters Summer League Day

A capacity crowd filled the Pasadena Women's City Club on Saturday July 27, 2013. After Los Angeles County LWV Board president Nancy Mahr welcomed the group, she reminded us that County League Days will take place on the last Saturdays of September, January and July. She noted that when there are ballot measures, the September meeting (to be held on the 28th this year) would be used to review the ballot measures. Nancy then introduced County LWV officials, past presidents and other attendees.

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles announced the formation of a Gun Safety Committee. Anyone interested in learning more about this committee will find information at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lwvc-gun-safety> The group will hold a "Teach-In" to explain gun laws on Thursday, September 18, 2013 at 1PM in the old Helm's Bakery Building on 8800 Venice Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles 90034 (310-204-2348). For additional information, contact LWV LA at 213-368-1616.

Tom Carson followed with a brief update on the progress of our 501(c)(3) effort. He noted:

- There has been no immediate direct effect on our effort of the government focus on 501 (c) (3)s. The government is looking specifically at partisan political activity.
- 501(c)(4)s are not very popular these days
- People are still concerned about our ability to do lobbying. It is not a problem because it is based on money spent and the LWV spends very little on lobbying. Advocacy is ok! There is a reporting requirement so expenses for lobbying will need to be tracked and reported very carefully but advocacy does not represent a problem at all.

The group then split up into workshops. LWVBC was represented at all of the workshops. For additional information about the workshops, please contact the attendees:

- Presidents' Workshop – Susan Grebe
- Agriculture Workshop – June Eicker, Jan Nathanson, Maggie Wilkinson
- Education – Peggy Bartlett, Margaret Thelen
- Smart Voter – Joan Arias

After lunch and the traditional popovers, we spent a wonderful hour with the witty and knowledgeable Raphael Sonenshein, Director, Pat Brown Institute. A graduate of Princeton and Yale Universities and former professor of political science at Cal State University, Fullerton, Dr. Sonenshein referenced the "moral authority" of the League of Women Voters and reviewed the last election in Los Angeles. He noted that despite the low turnout, we should think positive – after all, one fourth of the population voted! He lamented that half the states in the United States are trying to make it tougher to vote even as the League is trying to attract more voters! He expressed the hope that the limitations would make people rise up and vote in protest and he facetiously noted that perhaps we should make voting illegal to attract more voters!

He made 5 key points about the last elections:

1. Looking at the numbers, he noted that Republicans have become an “endangered species” in California and that this marks the beginning of a new phase. He pointed to Eric Garcetti’s defeat of Wendy Gruel thanks to the Republican base who voted 2 to 1 for Garcetti despite the anticipation that they would vote for Ms. Gruel! Individual Republicans are turning out to be influential despite the lack of cohesion in the party. “These days it is more popular to be a conservative than a Republican,” he noted. He also pointed to Unionism at City Hall, which was a particular issue in Los Angeles, the strongest union city in the Nation. Garcetti made it his issue and the unpopularity of the Department of Water and Power Union (and the DWP itself) as well as the swing votes of the Republicans led to Mr. Garcetti’s success.
2. Term limits have had serious effects on Los Angeles. City Hall needed to be shaken up but term limits have become a “catastrophe” for Sacramento because of all the termed out politicians who have now “discovered” Los Angeles City Government and are revitalizing Los Angeles politics. He expressed the notion that we are “Sacramento-izing” Los Angeles. He pointed to the results of term limits as “good intentions leading to bad consequences.” He said it would be interesting to watch Garcetti and the City Council machinations with the DWP!
3. Women – Dr. Sonenshein asked where the women have gone! He pointed to the term limits in Sacramento to explain why there is a dearth of women in LA City Government!
4. Money – Candidates with the most money do not always win! The last elections for Board of Education prove that money does not always govern turnout. He noted that the low turnout has lowered the influence of money because the people who turned out to vote tended to be people with personal knowledge of the candidates!
5. Blurring of race and ethnicity – this was a particularly unpolarized election from a racial and ethnic standpoint. All our preconceived notions were turned upside down. Dr. Sonenshein said that the unexpected is the “most fun” to watch!

After a lively and wide-ranging Q&A session in which he called Los Angeles County “well run and poorly governed,” Dr. Sonenshein received the applause and thanks of the group for his witty and sharp observations on Los Angeles governance.

POPOVERS EDUCATION WORKSHOP – Harriet Chase

(Many thanks to Jean Cohen, WPC chair, for the news note.)

Joanne Leavitt, LWVC Program Director for Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Barbara Inatsugu, LWVC Program Director for PK-12 Education, chaired the Education Workshop at the LWV/LAC summer League day. The featured presenter was Cristina Alvarado, Executive Director of the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, and a member of LWV Pasadena Area. Cristina emphasized the importance of making relationships with local staff members of Assembly and State Senate members. A good many members of the Legislature are new this year and need to be educated on the importance of developmentally appropriate, quality child care. Emphasize the importance of keeping state funded ECE programs in the Department of Education and oppose any realignment of them to the counties. Noting that almost 100,000 state funded child care slots have been lost in the past years, Cristina urged everyone, as individuals, to let Governor Brown know the importance of more funding and additional programs benefiting our neediest very young children.

SOCIAL POLICY UPDATE

The following announcements are courtesy of Kay Ragan, Director of the LWVC social policy committee:

Education Committee Appointed, Applications Being Accepted! The Education Committee was appointed by the State Board. Barbara Inatsugu will chair the Pre K-12 grades and Joanne Levitt will head up Early Childhood Education as Co-Chairs of the Committee. Some applications for committee membership have been received; additional applications are welcome to insure that we have all areas of the state represented. Submit your letter of interest with a brief bio to [Kay Ragan](#) if you would like to be on the committee.

Proposed Higher Education Study: Lucas Ramirez, LWV Los Altos-Mountain View and Eleanor Yick, LWV Santa Clara Valley is the chair of the Study Scope Development Committee. You may sign up for the Higher Ed Study listserv at <http://ca.lwv.org/stay-informed>. The Committee is expected to identify the scope of the study, potential resources, develop questions the study will be expected to answer and to confer with our Executive Director, Melissa Breach relative to potential donors for support of the study. The State Board expects to receive the Higher Education Study Scope and plan document before the January meeting.

Borrow the Healthcare Movie from LWVC: The League owns multiple copies of the Healthcare movie. You may contact the office to borrow one. We have permission to show these publicly, if you do so, send a message to healthcaremovie@healthcaremovie.net and inform them of the date, time and place of the viewing. You may also find additional healthcare information at that website.

Gun Safety Discussion Online: There is a new Yahoo Group for those interested in gun safety. Sign up for this and all other LWVC communications at <http://ca.lwv.org/stay-informed>.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM POSITION

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) first adopted a position on the Initiative and Referendum process in 1984. The position was updated in 1999. Earlier this year, members of LWVBC participated in two consensus meetings regarding our position on the California initiative and referendum process. We then submitted the results of those meetings to the League of Women Voters of California, who combined our results with those of other Leagues across the state. Based on these inputs, the League position has been updated again in 2013 and adopted at the annual LWVC Convention in June 2013.

The core element in the League's position has remained the same through all revisions: Support for citizens' right of direct legislation through the initiative and referendum. The update identifies specific changes in the various stages of the initiative/referendum process and includes a set of principles to be considered. The LWV of Los Angeles County Voter from June/July 2013 has an excellent article on the new position at http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org/files/2013_06_LACVoter.pdf

Date	Time	Subject	Place
Saturday September 7	9:00 am – 11:30 a.m.	Annual Kickoff Meeting	H.T. Grill 1701 S. Catalina Ave. Redondo Beach
Tuesday September 10	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Susan Grebe 629 19 th Street Manhattan Beach
Tuesday September 24	TBD	Voter Registration Day	TBD
Saturday-Sunday October 5-6	10:00 am – 6:00 pm	Hometown Fair	Valley Park Manhattan Beach
Tuesday October 8	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of TBD
Tuesday October 22	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Membership Meeting	Manhattan Beach Community Church 303 S. Peck Avenue Manhattan Beach



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