



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE BEACH CITIES

THE BEACH VOTER

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities

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**LWVC State Convention 2009
Friday morning Open Plenary Session
May 15, 2009 Maggie Wilkinson, LWVBC Delegate**

Welcome speech by Long Beach Mayor, Bob Foster. As part of the order of business, LA City League (LWVLA) proposed an amendment that would change the order of business so a non-recommended program item could be considered before the recommended program was adopted. This was adopted as a procedural matter. Janis Hirohama gave her president's report for the last two years which included a summary of some of the major activities. Some of the highlights were the record number of elections (4 in 15 months), moving to a new office while the executive director was out for 5 months maternity leave, implementing the member recruitment program, and the Easy Voter becoming an important guide with the funding by the Irvine Foundation of (\$550,000.)

Bill Newcom, Executive Director, back on the job, also gave her report where she commented the office stayed in the black for the first 2 years and they have a new administrative assistant, Miranda Perry, who is working out well. With administrative expenses mounting to 15% of the State LWV budget and because of the economic situation this year, they are doing some cost cutting.

Tom Corson, the Budget Committee Chair, presented the proposed budget and commented that fund raising is the most challenging revenue source particularly in this economic environment.

The lunch break included a speaker: John Cruz, who is the Governor's Appointment Secretary. He is responsible for finding candidates to be appointed to State Boards and Commissions – which there are 307. He explained how an individual would apply for a position on one of the State Boards or Commissions and suggested that getting several recommendations would help raise one's profile and possibly expedite getting the appointment.

Following the lunch break, we had another plenary session where the nominating committee report was given and presentations were made on the proposed LWVC program for 2009 to 2011.

Minda Craig, the State Board Advocacy Director, explained the LWVC proposal to create a second Vice President for both the LWVC Board and the Ed Fund Board. IN the case of the LWVC 1st VP, the individual would work with the Advocacy/Program Directors and the Ed. Fund 2nd VP would oversee the Voter Service work along with the Voter Service Director. **see next column**

LWVC State Convention 2009 continued from Page 1 column 1
Early Saturday morning (7am to 8:30am) I attended the Environmental Caucus which included a review of the major issues with Energy and Water. The presenters covered the key issues in both areas and suggested local leagues look for other organizations to partner with and the possibility of recruiting new LWV members.

**Impressions of a First Time Convention Delegate
by Michelle Murphy**

I was fascinated by my first LWV California Convention. Because I know little about the League way, I may be uninformed in my impressions, but here is what I saw. The quality of the delegates (doctors, lawyers probably Indian Chiefs although I didn't spot him or her) was impressive and even awe inspiring. Everyone spoke in full sentences with felicitous phrasing and their arguments were cogent and persuasive. Except in the plenary they didn't get much time to speak. Much of the convention was spent following Robert's Rules of Order and doing routine business that was passed unanimously, but required sometimes two readings and seconds of motions and just a lot of time. It seemed to me that some of that could have been handled by a consent calendar or some other trick that those parliamentary whizzes should be able to figure out.

Janis was a supremely able chair of the meeting. Perhaps sometimes too able. She limited discussion on the substantive issues to two or sometimes one minute per speaker and only six minutes per issue so many delegates who lined up to express their opinions were turned away. Both Saturday and Sunday the morning session ended with spare chunks of time that I retrospectively wished could have been used for more of the stimulating arguments both pro and con for the issues before the convention.

It felt to me that the real issues of the convention were sometimes unstated. From reading between the lines I surmised that the economic crisis has hit the League and caused them to decide to scale back to basics. A grant from the Irvine Corporation allowed the Board to conduct a program planning process that created a new structure for the board and a new strategic direction for the state league: "Democracy Voting and Civic Engagement." Some delegates worried that the new direction might weaken opportunities for advocacy.

My favorite time at the convention was in the Health Care Caucus Saturday afternoon where I saw deeply passionate and equally deeply informed advocates explaining their work and their hopes for sensible health care in our state and country. I was inspired. It was an honor and a pleasure to have able to attend the convention.

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One hundred plus people filled the Redondo Beach Public Library on Tuesday April 21, to hear speakers representing all phases of the Los Angeles County Foster Care system and to learn about the successes and challenges of foster care. The Redondo Beach Library, the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles and the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities co-sponsored the Foster Care Forum, a thought-provoking evening that focused on a timely issue: Foster Care and how Los Angeles County handles foster children from the time they become known to the County to when they become "emancipated," a term that we learned is not a favorite of the former foster children who prefer "transition to independence."

After Kimberly Bishop, Redondo Beach Library Director, welcomed the crowd, Barbara Arlow, League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities introduced keynote speakers Leslie Starr Heimov, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles and California Youth Connection representatives and former foster children, Porschea Williams and Michael Bower.

Ms. Starr Heimov gave the group an overview of the system and its challenges which include the fact that 32,000 children are involved with the dependency system in Los Angeles County - more than anywhere else in the country (and indeed, in the world!). Some of the children are with relatives, some in group homes, some in foster families and some in the process of being adopted. Most of the children have suffered abuse and neglect and are affected by the sometimes frequent changes in their living situations and in the schools they attend. She described the challenges these young people face and the surprising fact that most of them look toward the future with optimism and generosity, wanting to give back to the community and help current foster children. She emphasized that most parents love their children and want to be good parents but often they have been victims themselves in the past. Given the right support, they can become better parents and despite the press' focus on terrible failures, many succeed. She also highlighted that most children want to be with their families and that the goal of the system is to keep children with their families - either their parents or other family members if that is possible. When families come to the attention of the County mostly through doctors, teachers or neighbors, the social workers first look to see if the child can be kept home safely **continued on page 4, column 2 see and**

LWVC CONVENTION – A RETREADS VIEW

The nuts and bolts report

By Susan Grebe, Co-President LWVBC

This year's LWV Convention was conveniently (for us) held in Long Beach, California. There were six Beach Cities Leaguer's in attendance, Janis Hirohama, LWVC President, Wendy Phillips, LWVC outgoing Secretary; Delegates were Peggy Bartlett, Maggie Wilkinson, Michelle Murphy, and Susan Grebe. The events started on Thursday, May 14th and ended Sunday, May 17th. This report will focus on the plenary sessions and the business conducted.

The LWVC Board recommendations included "no new study" and two items for education and action, 1) Redistricting and 2) Government Reform. The **delegates proposed** one non-recommended Study as well as two new education and **Retreads View continued on page 4, column 2 see advocacy**

It Takes A Village To Raise A Foster Child continued continued from page 4 column 1, see safely

and as a last alternative, a foster home. For those children who cannot be reunited with their families the hope always remains for a "forever family"... an adoptive family that will choose them.

Ms. Starr Heimov talked about the Los Angeles system where children participate in court as much as is practical unlike other venues in which children are kept out of the court. Unique to LA is a Monterey Park Courthouse exclusively for children and a Torrance Family Visitation Center that represents a big advancement in the visitation process which keeps children in touch with their parents and families even when they may reside in foster homes or group homes. Another focus for the County is ensuring that the children who "age out" at age 18 receive the support that they need to become productive members of society. She was very hopeful about the Federal Legislation passed in October - **Connection to Success** - that will enable us to use federal funds to help foster youth until age 21

Following the overview, recently emancipated foster care graduates Porschea Williams and Michael Bower told us about their lives. While their foster-care experiences both in families and in group homes were sometimes rocky, we were impressed with their articulate presentations and with their work with the California Youth Connection to help today's foster children so that the next generation will have a more positive experience and a sense that there is "someone out there" who can help them.

The Q&A session raised a number of questions ranging from whether people had to pay to receive training to become foster parents (NO) to how to volunteer and help children in need by mentoring, becoming a foster parent, adoption or through other vehicles such as helping the Visitation Center as monitors. To answer these questions representatives of the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (C.A.S.A.) the California Youth Connection, Free Arts for Abused Children, the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, Five Acres Foster/Adoption Agency and the Department of Children and Family Services each gave brief presentations about their work and volunteer opportunities for the attendees. Especially needed are volunteer mentors, educational advocates and people willing to be trained and then act as monitors at the Torrance church parish house where families can reunite for 90 minute visits with their children.

For more information about the event and web sites and addresses or phone numbers for the organizations represented, contact Harrie Chase, Social Policies Director of the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities: hzhchase@roadrunner.com (310-545-1026) whose leadership, hard work and dedication made this event a success! Special thanks go to planning committee members Janelle Freeman and Michelle Murphy, Moderator Barbara Arlow and to the other LWVBC members who contributed to the effort: Joan Arias, Jan Nathanson Sunhee Park, Wendy Phillips, Doris Rosenberg, Margaret Thelen and Maggie Wilkinson.

Retreads View Continued from page 4, column 1 see and advocacy issues. The new study proposed was a State-wide Prison Study. The first motion for education and action was for the three issues rated most important by our members: Local Finances, Water and Health Care; and the second motion for education and advocacy was for the continued. **page 5, column 1 single**

League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities
By Joan Arias
38th Annual Meeting -
May 9, 2009 10:00 am -12:30 pm

LWVBC 38th Annual Meeting
continued from Page 5, column 1, see will

At our annual meeting and luncheon held at Ann Martin's home we reviewed this year's activities and the reports reminded us of all our activities during the year: the September Tri-LWV breakfast at which Ted Lieu spoke on state finances, an action meeting in October to review the November election propositions, the meeting at which Ken Hall spoke on the state budget, our traditional December program planning meeting and holiday luncheon, a January panel on climate change followed by a consensus meeting on the National Popular Vote Compact in combination with the Torrance League and Erika Bonilla's March overview of the historic 2008 election. The year ended with a very well attended forum on Foster Care.

effect the ability of local governments to deliver services.

This exciting project will include looking at the six cities that make up our membership and exploring how they react to the financial difficulties the State faces. So we have an exciting year coming!

We approved the slate of officers, learned that our membership has held up well and the web site plans promise to make finding information about our activities easier. We also began to think of creative ways to fund our future activities. A key action as well was the group's approval of a suggested project for education and advocacy -- that we examine civic engagement and the state's financial shortfalls will **see page 5, column 2 see effect**

With State Convention only a week away, we were privileged to have Janis Hirohama and Wendy Phillips with us for the Annual meeting. Janis spoke about the State goals for the next year, specifically a focus on the successful implementation of redistricting as well as government reform in general.

Paul Silva, editor and publisher of the Beach Reporter spoke about the future of the press and journalism, giving us some local history and thoughts about the changing nature of journalism. We thanked The Beach Reporter for their support of League activities including advertisements and a front-page article in the Daily Breeze about the foster-care activities.

Retread's View continued from page 4, column 2 single issue of Health Care.

Retread's View continued from page 5, column 1, see request

All the LWVC Board proposals passed with a simple majority. All the delegate proposed measures failed. The delegate measure that came closet to passing was the motion for education and action on health care, with 96 votes for and 82 votes against. While a simple majority is needed to pass a Board recommended item, it takes a 3/5 majority to pass a delegate proposed (non-recommended) motion.

LWVUS to lobby for the inclusion of single payer health insurance as part of the current deliberations and dialogue to fix our health care system. The second delegate proposed resolution called for consideration of the LWVC Board to consider the reinstating of the publication Pros and Cons. The third delegate proposed resolution called for transparency to be added to SARA(secure, accurate, re-countable and accessible) the LWVUS voting standard. All three resolutions were approved by a simple majority vote.

The delegates fared better with the three resolutions they proposed. The first resolution was to request that LWVC request **continued Page 5 column 2. see LWVUS**

The proposed 2009-2011 Board Officers and Directors Slate passed unanimously. During the directions to the board there was much gratitude expressed to Janis Hirohama and her board for all their hard work. It was a joy meeting the young vibrant LWVC staff; they all went the extra mile to facilitate our needs and requests. And on a personal note, it was by far the most engrossing and engaging convention I have ever attended.

For membership. Send check (payable to the League of Women Voters –Beach Cities) to Peggy Bartlett at 701 13th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266)

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

Interest _____

Calendar – Peggy Bartlett	
Monday, June 22, 6:00pm	New Old Board Meeting Potluck, Home of Joan Arias, 310-798-8797, carpooling suggested
Saturday, July 25, 9:30am-2:00pm	L.A. County Popovers in Pasadena, Pasadena Women’s Club, Call Peggy Bartlett 310-545-1087 for reservations
TBA	Tri-League Summer Event Tri-League Kick-Off - September

Welcome to our three new members: Marti Marshall of Playa del Rey, Phyllis Appel of Redondo Beach and Dan Brann of El Segundo.



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**LWVUS NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE
COMPACT
LOCAL CONSENSUS REPORT**

Members of the Beach Cities and Torrance Leagues met in February to discuss the proposed National Popular Vote Compact. The history of the Electoral College and the Pros and Cons of the Compact were reviewed. Consensus was reached and is summarized below. The full consensus report was sent to LWVUS, and after all Leagues respond, the national board will determine whether there is a position on this issue. The highlights of our consensus are as follows:

Amending the Constitution:

1. A strong majority favored that action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.

2. There was strong agreement that because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.

Congressional Consent:

3. We agreed if there is a national consensus for the Compact, the possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.

Enforcement:

4. There was strong agreement that the enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concern.

Uniformity:

5. We concluded that the uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.

Popular Election of President:

6. There was consensus that it is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College that it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.

Achievability:

7. We agreed that the NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

We agree that a constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Comment: A strong majority support our current position.

Report submitted by
League of Women Voters Beach Cities
League of Women Voters Torrance

Jan Nathanson, Joan Arias, Margaret Thelen
Susan Grebe, Kay White

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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 Beach Voter

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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.

Website Links, Doris Rosenberg:

LWV United States	www.lwv.org
LWV California	www.lwvc.org
LWV LA County	www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org
LWV Beach Cities	www.beachvoter.org
Smart Voter	www.smartvoter.org
Secretary of State	www.ss.ca.gov
California Senate	www.senate.ca.gov

In Loving Memory

Jeanne Leuschner, a long time League member passed away Feb 28, 2009 after a short illness. She first joined the Beach Cities LWV in 1972. Her bright mind and generous spirit graced our League in many ways. She was our **Poet**, our **song writer extraordinaire** and for many, many years our **Voter Editor**. Her **positive attitude and willingness** to give of her **time and talents** will **forever** be **appreciated** by all who were **lucky enough to know her**. We will truly miss her. Her Family has requested that anyone wishing to make a donation in her memory can do so by **donating to our Beach Cities League of Women Voters or St John Lutheran Church of Gardena**.