



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

LWVTA *Voter*

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

May/June 2010

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters 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.

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	1
LWVTA Annual Meeting	1
Dues Increase Explained	4
Budget, 2010-11	5
Open Government Report	6
Health Report	6
Voting Information	7
Calendar	8
Contacts	8

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 martinvoter@verizon.net by the 15th of each month. The editor is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information reported.

Editor: Geneva Martin

President's Message

LWVTA's YEAR IN REVIEW

This was an auspicious year for the League of Women Voters Torrance Area. This was our first official year as the LWV TORRANCE AREA (LWVTA) during which we spent time certifying the new name with state officials and League officials. The name recognizes 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 City, and Lomita, as well as Torrance.

During the year, we were honored to receive separate proclamations from three cities that we serve. The national League's 90th Anniversary was recognized by Councilwoman Julie Ruiz-Raber, City of Carson; Mayor Frank Scotto, City of Torrance; and Mayor Don Suminaga, City of Lomita.

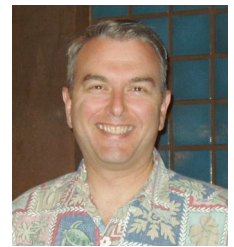
In August, 2009, we continued our local league campaign to write and call everyone to support the Congressional Healthcare bill including House Representative Jane Harman, and Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein. The bill kept changing almost daily but it was finally completed, approved by both houses of Congress and signed by the President on March 23, 2010! Following that triumph, some of us, notably our own Barbara Barker-Krank, will continue in the noble League tradition to represent us at our national convention in

(Continued on page 2)

LWVTA Annual Meeting

Lola Ungar

The May 22, Annual Meeting began with a very nice buffet breakfast at Marie Callender's. Our guest speaker was Brian Sunshine, City of Torrance Assistant City Manager. Brian set a comfortable tone with the audience as he spoke about a long list of numbing numbers such as the City of Torrance's current jobless rate of 6%, the sad commercial property vacancy rates on our major boulevards, and the City's almost 9 million dollar deficit. He also mentioned some plans for future development on the airport property that belongs to the City; i.e., the future development of a dedicated building for the Museum of Flight proposed for the east end of the airport along Crenshaw Boulevard and the interchanging of parcels and expansions by various auto dealerships along the south end of the airport. In addition, Brian easily answered a variety of questions asked by our group.



During the business portion of the meeting, we adopted a budget (see page 4) that included a raise in our annual dues because national and state League dues are being increased, elected the slate of candidates for office, and approved the existing program positions as printed in your Annual Meeting Kit, and also in your roster that we will distribute to all members later this summer. You can also see our program positions on our website at

(Continued on page 3)

League of Women Voters Torrance Area News

President's Message *(Continued from page 1)*

Atlanta, GA in June to fight on in our support for single payer healthcare.

At the Tri-League Kickoff meeting in September, we heard from Robert Stern, President, Center for Governmental Studies, who spoke to the Leagues of Beach Cities, Palos Verdes Peninsula and Torrance Area about the need for California governmental reform, especially since the last few years set our legislature askew when the passage of California's budget was stalled interminably.

During the League year, we held two Candidates Forums under the direction of Pat Kromka, 1st Vice President and Voter Service Director. One was for the City of Lomita's election for City Council held in early November and the other was in April for the City of Torrance's City Council, Clerk and Treasurer candidates running in the June 8 election. Many of our new and continuing members were there to help out as we hosted the event with the Torrance Area AAUW and the Torrance Council of PTAs. These events were great ways for many of our new and continuing members to get involved in League activities. Even if we don't live in a particular city that we serve, it becomes an educational experience as we learn about their public issues. As you may have noticed, we conduct the forums with fairness and equal time for all.

In December 2009, we held a holiday program planning meeting to discuss proposed County and National Program Planning ideas. If League members want to make a difference in government, we need to study relevant issues. Remember that we don't talk about issues unless we have studied them. During the meeting, we decided to support the continued LWV/LACounty's study on Jails in Los Angeles County. The Torrance Area League plans to hold a local meeting on that subject during the coming year. We will be looking for members interested in some area of the topic to become a part of our local committee on the Jails of Los Angeles County.

In early February, some of us took part in the Los Angeles Unified School District's advisory election to indicate to the LAUSD Superintendent the type of school management preferred by various Los Angeles school communities. We organized and ran the elections on two separate days for three hours each at Hyde Park Elementary School in Inglewood. We had two teams with Bertie Woods, Mary Lou Busch and myself on the Tuesday

(Continued on page 3)

Board of Directors 2010-11

President of Record: Lola Ungar*
Co-President: Linda Brown
1st Vice President: Pat Kromka*
2nd Vice President: Geneva Martin
Secretary: Kay White*
Treasurer: Sue Martin

Directors

Advocacy: Lola Ungar
At Large: Margaret Carter
Communications: Sydne Morrison
Education/Social Policy: Gerry Rische
Government/Elections: vacant
Membership: Linda Brown
Program/Pros & Cons: Emma Simmons
Public Relations: Lola Ungar
Speakers Bureau: Miriam Taylor
Voter Editor: Geneva Martin
Voter Service/Smart Voter: Pat Kromka

Off-Board Portfolios

Children & Family Issues: Sandra Strong
Education/Social Policy: Tom Rische
Financial Development: Athena Paquette
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: Barbara Barker

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown

Sydne Morrison thanks everyone for their kind and thoughtful wishes following the death of her husband, David.

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

President's Message *(Continued from page 2)*

election day, and then with Eunice Hargrove, Sandra Strong and myself working on the following rainy *Saturday*. That two-day event earned the Torrance Area League \$440! Hopefully, you can help us officiate at our next election endeavor to keep our finances in the black!

On February 14th, we took a break from serious thoughts and met at the home of Linda Brown, to celebrate the 90th Birthday of the League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS) at our annual CHOCOLATE SUNDAY! The day commemorated the brave men and women who fought for the 19th Amendment and achieved women's right to vote in the U.S. Just imagine that, we women would not be able to vote were it not for all those who fought for that right90 years ago!

In March 2010, we were the official hosts at the annual Tri-League Lasagna meeting at the Katy Geissert Main Library Community Room. The speaker, Dr. Dowell Myers, USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development, Population Dynamics Research Group, challenged those who were wondering whether California is on the brink of a divided disaster—the north against the south—and assured the members of the audience that it could be a shared success.

During the same month, we sponsored the Visions of Unity Arts Contest for which Torrance students create original artwork, essays, stories and poetry.

In April, the Torrance League responded to the cutbacks taking place in all areas of the City of Torrance and TUSD and came out in support of Measure A on the June 8 ballot. Our letter to the Editor of the *Daily Breeze* was published, and we spoke before the City Council in support of Measure A. This measure would consolidate the future elections of the Torrance City Council and the Torrance Unified School District on the last Tuesday in April of even years and save more than \$250,000. The LWV Torrance Area supports close communication and cooperation between the City of Torrance and the TUSD in areas of mutual interest. I urge you to go all the way down to the very last item on your ballot and help the City Council and TUSD save a minimum of \$250,000 by voting for consolidation of our local elections. Vote YES ON MEASURE A on June 8!

As you can see, we are well recognized in the community, thanks to all of you as we pulled together for the good of the League. We all deserve accolades because every one of us helped in some

small way to educate and inform the public about the importance of voting. We are the very proud League of Women Voters Torrance Area!

Sincerely,

Lola Ungar, Co-President

Annual Meeting *(Cont'd from page 1)*

www.lwvnet.org/ca/torrancearea.

Information about League views on county, state and national issues can also be found on each of their websites. Their addresses are printed on the back of this newsletter.

Lola Ungar thanked Treasurer Sandra Strong and Voter Editor LaVonne Wuertz who were leaving the current board and gave them lovely begonias. Lola also thanked continuing members, Co-President Linda Brown, Pat Kromka, Kay White, Syd Morrison, Emma Simmons and Gerry Rische and gave each a basil or lavender plant.

Enthusiasm was high as we closed the meeting and set forth on a new year in League. Come to the Old/New Board Pot Luck on Saturday, July 17, 10 to 1:30 PM at Lola's home and help us plan that great new year.



New and returning board members at the Annual Meeting, clockwise from left: Barbara Barker, Emma Simmons, Geneva Martin, Sue Martin, Kay White, Dorothy Stewart, Athena Paquette, Lola Ungar and Linda Brown.

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



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
TORRANCE AREA**

Cordially invites you to a

PREVIOUS & NEW BOARD

POTLUCK

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2010

10:00 AM to 1:30 PM

**Luncheon
& Calendar Planning**

Suggestions:

A-H dessert

I-P veggies/salad

Q-Z protein

Bring your favorite dish!

At the home of Lola Ungar
3903 Bluff Street
Torrance, 90505



Contact the League Phone:
310-618-8711 OR 310-375-7410



local treasury. The Board has reduced its budget each year recently but cannot sustain its fixed expenses without an increase in our local dues. Given this information, the members discussed the pros (sustainable budget) and cons (hardship and possible loss of membership) and the majority voted to increase our dues to \$70 per individual, \$105 per family and \$35 for a student.

Just a note to our accountant members: while this is indeed a 16.6% increase, it pales next to the 100% increase of 1963 when the dues rose to \$10 per year.

Our greatest concern is that we might lose membership and we sincerely hope that we do not. Our members are aware that we have been struggling against this action for several years but can no longer avoid it. It is the same situation that most membership organizations are facing.

On the bright side, our Charter Members and those who joined when our League was new will soon be "Golden Members". All levels of League recognize 50-year members by providing membership at no cost. The Torrance League began in 1962 with **Laura Dubrow**, the late **Katy Geissert** and **Agatha Berwanger**, **Celia Kellman**, **Tibby Lanzer**, **Ruth Nadel**, **Mike Terre**, and **Marilyn Van Oppen**, along with 42 others, working with the Peninsula League to develop the "Know Your Town" Report and gaining League status as **LWV Torrance** from the National League. **Gladys Meade**, **Sydne Morrison**, **Jeanette Pierson**, **Anne Smisek**, and **Ethel Sellars** joined during that year, when dues were \$5.00. All of these members will be Golden in 2012. Actually Tibby Lanzer and Sydne Morrison joined the League in 1958 and are already enjoying their dues-free status and Gladys Meade joined in 1961 and will be Golden next year.

LWVTA Increases Dues

Barbara Barker

At our Annual Meeting, we discussed the rise in the payments we send to LWVCalifornia and LWVUS for each member. League members join at the local level and immediately become members at the County, State and National levels. We are provided information and services from these other levels, including advocacy of our important issues, and enjoy the right to vote via delegates to convention. Based on our membership numbers at the end of January each year, we are assessed a per member payment, known as PMPs in our budget. LWVCA and LWVUS PMPs will rise in July 2010.

With the impending increases, we would be sending \$1.50 to the County, \$23 to the State and \$30 to LWVUS, leaving only \$5.50 per member at the local level from our \$60 dues. The second member in a family dues household only provides \$2.50 to our

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

2010-2011 Budget Revised and Approved at Annual Meeting

Dorothy Stewart and Barbara Barker

The Budget Committee, chaired once again by former L.A. County Auditor, Dorothy Stewart, struggled again this year with our dwindling resources and presented the proposed budget that was included in the Annual Meeting kit. Subsequently, the Board received information that all other California Leagues donate \$100 toward the Smart Voter Project and that the PMPs (Per Member Payments) were increasing from LWVCalifornia and LWVUS. As a result, the Board issued a revised Proposed Budget and a recommendation that membership dues be increased \$5 per member. The discussion at the Annual Meeting led to the dues being increased \$10 per member.

For the information of new members, the League sets its budget each year. It is, of course, based on its assumed income from dues, donations and payment from running elections for local housing authorities, as well as our expected expenses. In the last ten years, we have had as many as 100 members and as few as 72, many as "family" units meaning they pay 150% of the annual dues to cover two members from the same address. Also, for most of the last ten years, we had a friend of the League who donated \$1,200 each year. She passed away in 2008 and we no longer have that income stream. Several of our members make much smaller donations on a regular basis. We have attempted several fundraisers, never raising more than \$500 net. Over a decade ago, the LWVT threw a party for Mayor Katy Geissert and raised over \$10,000. That money has funded our reserves, which still amount to around \$6,000.

Our expenses are mainly our PMPs described above, our telephone, printing and postage, Insurance necessary to protect board members from liability, post office box rental, web hosting fee, and donations to the Historical Society and Smart Voter. We also budget for the cost of hosting a few meetings and forums such as room rentals, paper goods refreshments and flyers. We can expect these costs to continue to rise over time.

We also budget for a portion of the cost of sending a delegate to conferences and conventions. These meetings provide great information for our Leagues and allow us to express our votes on future programs, elections, etc. Our budget barely covers the cost of registration, leaving transportation and housing expenses to the delegates. We have been fortunate to find members willing to "donate" the uncovered share but this precludes someone without the personal means from serving as a delegate.

We also have very little funding for local activities or to use as "seed money" for larger fundraising efforts. Having more meetings might attract more members but they also cost the League. Our highest grossing recent fundraiser was selling tickets to "The Capitol Steps" performance in 2009 but one of our members put up \$2,000 from her personal funds to purchase the tickets at the group rate so that we could make our profit on the resale. The effort netted \$500 and we would like to do it again. However, the budget only allows for a little over \$1,000 in front money now so the net would be much less.

We have the potential of running elections for housing associations but are still setting up the process, unfunded for the necessary marketing, and uncertain about the potential net income. Meanwhile, most of these associations are using their management companies to run their elections so the market may have dwindled considerably.

What this all means to the individual member is that our budget is now balanced by increasing your dues and using a bare bones approach on our expenses. If we want more League activity, and even a chance at better and more successful fundraising, we need donations and effort from the members. Athena Paquette has offered to be appointed as a Director and take Financial Development as her portfolio. She will need a committee to be successful. Please add a donation to your membership when you renew – and it is that time again.

Editor Changing

This is the final issue of the Voter that I will be editing. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to its production. Please send future correspondence to the new editor, Geneva Martin at martinvoter@verizon.net.

LaVonne Wuertz

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

City of Torrance Ethics and Integrity Committee

Dee Hardison, Open Government

The Ethics and Integrity Committee (The Committee) held a joint meeting with the Torrance City Council on May 25, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to present The Committee's proposed work plan. The proposed work plan has the following goals which were presented by individual committee members.

1. Establish process to monitor and improve training programs.
2. Promote and encourage ethical conduct for elected office candidates.
3. Develop an Ethics and Integrity marketing program.
4. Determine if Ethics Coordinator/Department Liaison is needed.
5. Conduct Council, Employer and Commissioner E & I Survey.
6. Receive and review of all ethics complaints.

After the presentations, city council members asked clarifying questions. Mayor Scotto recommended that The Committee first develop an Ethics and Integrity Training Program for individuals running for public office followed by Ethics and Integrity Training for elected officials, next for commissioners and committee members and finally for city employees. The enforcement issue was raised but will need further study after the training programs are developed. The first phase – developing an Ethics and Integrity Training Program for individuals running for public office needs to be finished within a year.

The City Council was very interested in one of the key steps for implementation for one of the proposed

work plan goals. The key step was to consider amending Torrance's Ethics Committee Ordinance to ensure that the Ethics Committee remains above political influence when developing guidelines for candidates.

Health Report

Barbara Barker

As I leave for the LWVUS Convention in Atlanta, I am proud that our own local League and our California State League have endorsed the Health Care Resolution that will be discussed there. Its purpose is to refine the advocacy efforts of the LWVUS Board toward educating the public on the value of single payer health insurance and supporting legislation that will bring this form of universal health care to the American people.

At the State level, Senate Bill 810, the California Universal Health Care Act that Senator Leno introduced last year, provides every Californian with comprehensive universal health care and is fully funded with the money that California already spends on health care. SB810 builds on our current system of privately delivered health care but is funded by a single, comprehensive health insurance plan that covers all residents of the state, allowing them to choose their own doctors and hospitals.

To learn more about the California Universal Health Care Act, visit California OneCare at www.californiaonecare.org.

Hopefully, we will soon be asked to take action to support SB810 at the State level, which will also address the question of whether individual states can institute their own systems of health care insurance for their citizens.

*LWVTA thanks
Barbara Barker
for her generous donation*



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Some candidates are not listed in the printed *Easy Voter Guide* booklet

Some candidates in the printed guide are not on the ballot

For a complete list of statewide candidates:

- See the Sample Ballot mailed to you by your county elections official
- Visit www.smartvoter.org
- Go to www.easyvoter.org for an updated version of the *Easy Voter Guide*

The California Secretary of State is not a project partner for the June 2010 *Easy Voter Guide*.

Questions? Contact easyvoter@lwc.org

Voting Early, June Election

Vote in person June 5 and 6 from 8 am-4 pm and June 7 from 8 am-5 pm at the County Recorder's office, 12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk.

About the League

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

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.

Visit Smartvoter.org for Additional Election Information

To find detailed information on statewide offices and propositions, go to Smart Voter's California Home Page. You can also get information on local contests and measures by visiting www.smartvoter.org and



entering your address. In many counties, you can even find your polling place. Check back regularly for more information, as candidates add to their Smart Voter webpages and more resources on ballot

measures become available as election day nears.

SAVE THE DATE: July 31, LWV Los Angeles County Popovers in Pasadena! Watch for flier.

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 \$70

Household \$105

Student \$35

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

Mail to: League of Women Voters 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.

2010 Calendar

- June 8 June Election, Torrance: Mayor, 3 Councilmembers, Treasurer, City Clerk; California Primary Election
- June 11-15 LWV National Convention, Atlanta
- July 17, 10 -1:30 pm Old Board/New Board Meeting . Potluck. Lola Ungar's home
- July 31 LWV LA County Popovers in Pasadena



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Torrance, CA 90508

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Time Dated