



League of Women Voters of Torrance

Serving Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita and Torrance

<http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org>

Tel. 310-618-8711

LWVT Voter

January 2009

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Torrance, 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 *LWVT Voter* is published monthly except July and December. All LWVT members are encouraged to provide relevant articles and calendar events for publication in the *LWVT 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

President's Message

I hope that all our members enjoyed warm loving holidays with friends and families. And now we turn our thoughts to what we might accomplish in 2009.

In the voting arena, there are three local elections in March--Carson, Gardena and Los Angeles but no forums have been scheduled by the LWV. However, the respective City Clerks invite anyone interested in working the March election at the polls to get in contact with their offices.

For us, January brings a members-only local program meeting on January 24 and the County League Day on the 31st; February will star the Chocolate Sunday on February 15th; the Annual Tri-League Lasagna Dinner will be on March 12th and there will be a general meeting on March 14th to discuss the direction of health care reform at the state and national levels.

We have felt the fresh energy brought on by such a lively presidential campaign within our League. More members have been coming out to events and volunteering for tasks and we thank all of you and hope to see much more of you. In the last year, our membership count has risen from 73 to 86! We have new life and we all feel it.

Barbara Barker

Local Program Meeting Set

There will be a members-only meeting on Saturday, January 24th, from 10 am to noon at the home of Marcia Cribbs. We will be reviewing and making recommendations on the LWVTorrance positions (found in the Members' Rosters) and the LWVCalifornia positions. The LWVC material will be emailed to the members who use that medium and a hard copy is included with this issue of the *Voter* for the other members.

Members are encouraged to look over the material and attend the meeting. Those in attendance will engage in discussion about various issues, at the will of the membership, and ultimately decide the direction of interests to be taken by LWVT. We will also be sending our input to the LWVC to influence the direction at that level. The Board has decided that a member who has something she or he wants discussed but is unable to attend the meeting may send a message to the President. It will be read at the meeting and entered into the discussion. Obviously, there is more to be gained by being a participant at the meeting.

Are you Golden?

LWVT is looking for members who have been in the League of Women Voters for 50 years or more. If this is you, please contact Barbara Barker at 310-530-3750. Not only will you be elevated into a special membership category, but we would also like to recognize you at the Annual Meeting.

League of Women Voters of Torrance News

Housing Elections

On Tuesday, December 2nd, the LWVT ran a housing election for the Harbor Hills Public Housing Association in Lomita, for the Los Angeles County Housing Authority. Nine members, Marcia Cribbs, Eunice Hargrove, Dee Hardison, Sandra Strong, Lola Ungar, Bertie Woods, Andrea Wagner, Emma Simmons and Barbara Barker volunteered to work the polls, located in the impressive community center of the complex. At the end of the day, 32 residents had voted in a close race. When tallied, only two votes separated the two candidates for President.



The housing development is quite large extending north and south of Palos Verdes Drive along Western Avenue. The community center houses a large multi purpose room, a media center, and staff offices; and we were told there was a child care center also on the premises. The media center had banks of computers available for use by adults during the day and youth after school until 6 pm. A staff member provides computer classes and assistance for the residents.

The voting for the first Board of Directors for the Courtyard Villa Estates was done by mail-in ballot. Ballots and instructions were sent to each homeowner. The ballots were mailed to the LWVT's post office box. They were then taken to the housing development's community room where our volunteers, Linda Brown, LaVonne Wuertz, and Sandra Strong counted them in view of interested residents.

These elections provide an income for the League, as well as visibility in the community. Members are encouraged to respond to the requests for volunteers that go out in the newsletter when there is enough advance time and through e-mail when time is shorter. Because of the change in housing association laws at the State level, and an action campaign being designed by a team of volunteers, we expect to have more opportunities to conduct these elections.

Board of Directors 2009

President: Barbara Barker*
 1st Vice President: Pat Kromka
 2nd Vice President: Sue Herbers*
 Secretary: Kay White*
 Treasurer: Sandra Strong

Directors

Advocacy: Lola Ungar
 Communications: Sydne Morrison*
 Financial Development: Vacant
 Juvenile Justice: Vacant
 Government/Elections: Sue Herbers
 Membership: Venora Lee
 Natural Resources: Andrea Wagner
 Observers: Vacant
 Program: Vacant
 Public Relations: Lola Ungar
 Social Policy: Barbara Barker
 Voter Editor: LaVonne Wuertz*
 Voter Service: Pat Kromka

Off-Board Portfolios

Coastal Issues: Briana Krank
 Education: Mark Steffen
 Energy: Rick Wagner
 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 (*)
 Local Action: Gladys Meade
 MGIK (Membership Initiative): Barbara Barker and Venora Lee
 Nominating: Celeste Bailey

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown

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

The Time Has Arrived for Health Reform

By Barbara Barker

Two things happened at the end of last year that brightened the future for health care reform. The first was the formation of the LWVUS Health Care Task Force with the inclusion of Doris Nelson, LWVLos Angeles as a member. Doris has been involved in the health care discussion from the beginning. She is a member of Health Care for All as well as the League. Both groups espouse single payer plan as the most effective cure for the health care insurance problem and Doris is certainly an advocate. She has been a great support to the LWVCalifornia Health Care Committee since it was formed several years ago.

The other upturn was that the Obama Transition Team contacted Barbara Barker asking for a community based health care meeting to discuss certain questions and to participate in a survey on reform. It had to be conducted by the end of the year so there was only 48 hours notice to the e-membership and nine people participated. Our survey was submitted by the deadline and is being counted with thousands of others from all around the country by the Transition Team. Tom Daschle, Health and Human Services Director-elect, has promised a report will be forthcoming



In the meantime, our email friends have shared that members of the Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) have been invited to talk with Obama advisors about a single-payer health plan. This is very hopeful news as the health plan presented during Presidential debates was more similar to the Massachusetts Plan.

Additionally, the LWVUS has asked Leagues to arrange meetings with their Congressional Representatives to ask specific questions about League's priorities. These are:

1. What should the federal government do to ensure that every American has health coverage?
2. Do you support legislation to set a declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions, based on the best-available science, in order to combat global climate change?
3. What will you do to help reduce the level of partisanship at the federal level that has blocked progress on a number of important national issues in recent years?

Finally, on March 14th, we will hold a general meeting to talk about the progress of the health care proposals on the State and National levels.

Concerned About the Direction of Health Care Policy?

Actions you can take RIGHT NOW:

- ✓ Contact the Incoming Federal Administration. Tom Daschle, incoming Health and Human Services Secretary, is soliciting input from the public. Sign in at the website www.change.gov/openforquestions and choose Health Care, then vote on health care questions.
- ✓ Join the LWVUS Healthcare Listserv. This listserv has become an active forum for communicating health care issues. Sign up at www.lwv.org. (Select For Members, Get Involved, League Sponsored E-mail Lists.)
- ✓ Sign up for E-mail Alerts from Physicians for a National Health Plan (www.pnhp.org) and Healthcare-NOW (www.Healthcare-Now.org)

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

LWVC President Janis Hirohama Attended LWVT Holiday Party



A nice group of members brought tasty offerings to the home of Lola and Marty Ungar to enjoy the beginning of the holidays. Sixteen members were joined by our Management Training Advisor Mary Ellen Barnes and the League of Women Voters of California President Janis Hirohama.



Janis, who is a member of the Beach Cities League and previously served on the LWVUS Board, said that serving as the LWVC President has been the most rewarding for her because she is able to interface with local leagues and see and hear the grass roots efforts that are the basis of League work.



She described training that the LWVC Board has used to assess its strengths and weaknesses.

Local Elections in March

There will be General Municipal elections on March 3, 2009, in Carson, Gardena and Los Angeles (including district 15, Harbor City.) Voters are encouraged to follow the example of the record number of individuals in the November 4th election who checked SmartVoter (www.smartvoter.org) to obtain ballot information. LWVC reports that for the "November 4th election Smart Voter shattered its all-time record for website traffic, serving voters with over nine million page views in six states, including California, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts! Records were also set within California, which represents far and away the largest segment and a majority of Smart Voter's total online visitors."

LWV Palos Verdes Offers Harbor Tour

LWV Palos Verdes has shared an invitation to their Harbor Tour on February 18th. Please contact Pat Rome by telephone at 310-952-0533 or by e-mail at pjwrome@yahoo.com for more information and to let her know you will be coming and if any guests will be joining you. She will also have information available about places close by where tour members can join together for lunch.

LWV 89th Birthday Chocolate Sunday

The membership is being asked to meet a challenge with a great reward – chocolate! To celebrate the League of Women Voters' 88th Birthday, LWVTorrance is hosting a chocolate party with an "each one, reach one" theme. (See the accompanying flyer.) Invite your friends and acquaintances to our Chocolate Sunday. This is a social event with a membership-increasing motive (and a short membership appeal). It will be held from 2 to 4 pm on Sunday, February 15, at the home of Linda Brown. We are accepting donations of chocolate delights from our members. Please include your offer in your RSVP at the League phone.

Nominating Committee Would Like to Hear from You

If you are interested in becoming more active in League projects or leadership, please contact Celeste Bailey at 310-212-7119. She is chairing the Nominating Committee and has information about the positions available.

League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County News

LWV Los Angeles County Presents

Got Water? Or Where Has All the Water Gone?



Saturday, January 31, 2009
9:30 to 2:00 PM

Taix Restaurant
911 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 09926
213-484-1265

Panel Discussion

Tim Blair, MWD Representative

Richard Nagel, West Basin Water District Representative

Wendy Phillips, LWV

Convener and Moderator Jack Sullivan, LWV LAC

Luncheon Speaker

*Susan Jett, Director of Horticulture
Rancho Santa Ana Garden*

Send form & check by Wed. January 21, 2009
Mail to LWV/LACounty Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut,
Burbank, CA 91501

League _____
Names _____

Chicken Lunch _____ Vegetarian Lunch _____
Allergies _____

No. Reservations _____ @\$25.00=Total _____

If postmarked after January 21, 2009

No. Reservations _____ @\$30.00=Total \$ _____

Meet Senator Jenny Oropeza and Secretary of State Debra Bowen

Join them for an update on the California budget, Senate leadership, legislative issues and for a presentation on election issues. Share your perspectives about local and state matters!

Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, January 29, 2009
6:00 PM-7:30 PM

Westchester-Loyola Village Branch Public
Library, Mary Lou Crockett Room
7114 West Manchester Ave.
Los Angeles, 90045

Light refreshments served
Questions? 310-318-6994

November Election Breaks California Records

Los Angeles County Clerk Dean Logan reported that there were 2,695,894 ballots counted on Election Night. This included 377,205 returned vote-by-mail ballots and 2,318,689 ballots cast at polling locations on Election Day. The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk validated and added an additional 672,163 ballots during the four-week canvassing period for a final record-setting total of 3,368,057 ballots cast. These included 85% of the provisional ballots, which were validated.

California Secretary of State Debra Bowen stated in a *Daily Breeze* editorial on January 11 that a record 17.3 million Californians registered to vote for the November election and, of those, more than 13.7 million voted – 79.4%.

League of Women Voters of California News

League of Women Voters Files Amicus Brief Opposing Proposition 8

On January 15, 2009, LWVCalifornia issued the following press release:

SACRAMENTO, CA – The League of Women Voters of California filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court today supporting the legal challenge against Proposition 8.

Proposition 8 amends the California Constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. The legal challenge to Proposition 8, which passed on November 4, 2008, seeks to invalidate the proposition. Among those spearheading the challenge are the City and County of San Francisco, the County of Santa Clara, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and numerous individual Californians.

LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said: “The League believes that Proposition 8 is unconstitutional and should be invalidated. It sets a dangerous precedent by singling out a particular group and depriving that group of a fundamental right. In doing so it threatens the rights of us all.”

The League’s amicus brief argues that Proposition 8 is an invalid amendment to the California Constitution because it violates the overriding, fundamental constitutional principles of protection of equality and human dignity. The League also argues that Proposition 8 does not apply retroactively to invalidate same-sex marriages that took place before the measure took effect, because there is no clear indication of voter intent that it apply retroactively.

The LWVC has long opposed measures that threaten individual rights, including Proposition 22 in 2000, which also limited marriage to only being between a man and a woman. “We oppose Proposition 8 because we believe in protecting individual rights and no person or group should suffer legal discrimination,” said Hirohama.

The law firm of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP provided pro bono representation to the League in the filing of the amicus brief.

Preparing for Implementation of the Voters First Act (Prop. 11)

The California League of Women Voters worked hard to achieve the passage of Proposition 11, the California Voters First Act to change how redistricting is done in our state. With its passage, a 14-person citizen’s redistricting commission will determine district lines for Congress and California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization in 2011 after the next decennial census.

Representatives from the California Bureau of State Audits will be conducting public meetings regionally to solicit comments from the public regarding implementing of the Voters First Act. The Bureau is seeking comments on the processes for applying for and selecting Commission participants.

The Los Angeles area meeting is tentatively planned for Monday, February 23, 2009, at the Central Branch Library, Mark Taper Auditorium, 630 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, from 11 am to 5 pm.

For more detailed information direct your inquiries to Barbara Paget, Bureau of State Audits, 555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95814, telephone 916-445-0255, fax 916-323-0913, or email barbarap@bsa.ca.gov.

(Sources: California Bureau of State Audits and Dee Hardison, LWVT Open Government Portfolio)



LWVC Convention is coming to Long Beach in May. Visit LWVC’s website blog (a work in progress) “to ask questions, coordinate shared hotel rooms and carpools, see photos, and more.”

League of Women Voters of the United States News

Undue Influence in Washington



About the League

As a prelude to its government integrity reform agenda directed to the 111th Congress, a reform group including LWVUS, the Brennan Center for Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Democracy 21, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG said in a statement published November 6, 2008:

In order to fix Washington, the fundamental problems caused by the undue influence of contributions over government decisions must be effectively addressed. While other issues on our reform agenda are important, the way Washington works is not going to change until we fundamentally change the nation's campaign finance laws.

[In order to accomplish this goal, the overriding priority on our reform agenda for the 111th Congress is to repair the presidential public financing system and to create a new public financing system for congressional races.](#)

The key role that influence-money played in creating the national financial crisis provides just one more example of the enormous costs to citizens and taxpayers that come from federal candidates being dependent on special interest groups, lobbyists, bundlers and large contributions for their campaign funds.

It is widely acknowledged that the absence of effective regulation and oversight played a major role in the massive financial crisis that has occurred. Campaign contributions to federal officeholders from the financial sector played a major role in thwarting such effective regulation and oversight.

It is no coincidence that during the past decade, the financial sector contributed \$1.5 billion to federal candidates and their parties, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

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.

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
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>

2009 Calendar

Jan. 8, 7-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
Jan. 22, 2 pm	Financial Development Steering Comm., Linda Brown's home
Jan. 24, 10-12 noon	Gen'l mtg, state & local program planning, Marcia Cribb's home
Jan. 29, 6-7:30 pm	Town Hall mtg, Sen. Oropeza & Sec. of State Bowen, Westchester-Loyola Village Branch Public Library
Jan. 31, 9:30-2 pm	LWVLAC Winter League Day, Taix Restaurant, LA
Feb. 5, 7-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
Feb. 14	League's birthday
Feb. 15, 2-4 pm	Chocolate Sunday, Linda Brown's home
Mar. 3	Municipal elections (Carson, Gardena, LA & LA Comm.Coll.Dist.)
Mar. 5, 7-9 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)

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.



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Torrance, CA 90508

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