



September 2008

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

Fall brings the election season with Candidate Forums and Pros and Cons presentations. We have scheduled a forum in Gardena for the City Council candidates. Voter Service Director Pat Kromka has ordered copies of the *Easy Voter Guide* (<http://ca.lwv.org>, then click Elections) and the *Pros and Cons* for the November election. We will be providing voter registration information at the Torrance Farmer's Market on Saturday, October 11, Tuesday, October 14 and Saturday, October 18. We need our members to volunteer for a two to four hour shift at the table. With more volunteers, we will expand to October 4th and 7th. Contact Pat Kromka to set up a shift.

LWVC has also made its recommendations on the propositions available on its website.

The Tri-League Annual Kickoff Breakfast Buffet provides an opportunity to hear about the California budget – where it goes. Assembly-member Ted Lieu is the speaker on Saturday, September 20 at Marie Callender's Restaurant in Torrance.

LWVUS has created a Debate Watching Kit that is available on its website (www.lwv.org), parts of which are excerpted on page 7 of our *Voter*. The kit provides a great idea for engaging your friends and neighbors in the process. This election is a great time to engage others in the process of

educating themselves and voting for their representatives and issues.

Barbara Barker

Last Chance to Get Tickets to Capitol Steps



Only a few tickets are still available for the October 3rd performance of the hilarious political satire group, Capitol Steps. As reported last month, LWVT is collaborating with the Torrance Cultural Arts Foundation to sell tickets to the delightful performance. It's a tremendously entertaining evening for the price of \$50 per ticket. Even better, because LWVT was given a group rate, our treasury will swell when we sell all our tickets. Invite your friends to join you. The order form is available on our website home page. For more information, contact Barbara Barker at 310-530-3750. The tickets will not be available after September 20th.

Remembering Gene Drevno

Gene Alice Drevno passed away on the last day of August. She had recently joined the LWVT because she knew and respected our work. And we have every reason to respect her life, so well spent—as a widow who raised nine children, teacher, and community activist, serving on the Torrance Parks and Recreation and Civil Service Commissions, and, ultimately, City Council. She was a moving force behind the campaigns of many local politicians. She worked for the TUSD and the Torrance Education Foundation and, most lovingly, for children who had lost their way and needed direction and help.

League of Women Voters of Torrance News

My Take on the 2008 Torrance Strategic Planning Committee

By Lola Ungar

On Tuesday, August 12th the Torrance Strategic Planning Committee, aided by the Torrance Community Development Department, presented to City Council the results of its 2008 planning effort in assessing input from the community and creating a common vision for the future of Torrance. The first Strategic Plan was adopted by the City Council in 1996 and had last been updated in 1999.

The Process

Since 1999, the City Council and LWVTorrance members realized that there was a great need to update the General Plan and to form a Strategic Planning Committee to formulate new goals for the City. In 2007, the City Council took steps to initiate a review and renewal of the 1999 effort. A Strategic Plan Update Committee was created and was provided with a current survey, an environmental scan, and focus group data, and charged with reviewing and identifying existing and new goals for the City.

The composition of the Committee was changed for this renewal to include representatives of the community only, with no employee or council members as had been included in the past. The sixteen member committee included a small business representative; a large business representative; four homeowner association representatives; a Youth Council representative; a Torrance Unified School District representative; a Council on Aging representative; and seven at-large members appointed by Mayor and Council (I was an appointed at-large member). All members were appointed by the groups they represented and the Council and Mayor appointed the at-large members.

There was special emphasis on public input in the organization of the data gathering. Careful effort was made in the selection, creation, and implementation of the public input and data gathering methods in order to be as broad and inclusive as possible. The City contracted for a statistically valid phone survey of the residential community; a statistically valid phone survey of the business community; 13 facilitated interviews with focus groups representing a broad spectrum of community interests; and a professionally prepared environmental scan of the community.

In January 2008, the Committee juggled their calendars and began meeting weekly to review the data and analyze the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on the information received from the community. The Committee applied their knowledge and insight to determine whether the 1999 Strategic Plan continued to be responsive to the community's needs. The Committee

(Strategic Plan, cont'd on p. 5)

Board of Directors 2008-09

President: Barbara Barker*
1st Vice President: Pat Kromka
2nd Vice President: Sue Herbers*
Secretary: Kay White*
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Advocacy: Lola Ungar
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Juvenile Justice: Vacant
Government/Elections: Sue Herbers
Membership: Venora Lee
Natural Resources: Andrea Wagner
Observers: Vacant
Program: Vacant
Public Relations: Lola Ungar
Social Policy: Mark Steffen
Voter Editor: LaVonne Wuertz*
Voter Service: Pat Kromka

Off-Board Portfolios

Coastal Issues: Briana Krank
Energy: Rick Wagner
Health Care: Barbara Barker
Land Use: Lola Ungar
Mental Health: Carol Adams Smith
Open Government: Dee Hardison
Public Libraries: Judi Gerber
Voter Guide/Pros and Cons: Valerie Felix
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)

Directors' Reports

Natural Resources (Excerpts)—Andrea Wagner

Calculate your carbon footprint and find information about ways to reduce your impact on the environment at www.coolcalifornia.org.

As part of its focus on global climate change, LWV has taken a nationwide stand against new construction of coal-fired electric power plants.

- *Air Quality & Transportation:* On August 25, Senate Bill 375 passed the State Assembly (LWVC supported the bill). S.B. 375 is a major land-use bill that encompasses transportation and air quality concerns. In recognition that household car and truck pollution accounts for 30 percent of California's global warming pollution, the bill aims to reduce that pollution through better land-use planning by providing local governments incentives to build more compact neighborhoods and promote more transportation alternatives.
- *Energy:* There are two propositions on the State ballot this fall that deal with energy, proposition 7 "Renewable Energy Generation," and proposition 10 "Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy, Bonds". The LWV has taken a "No" position on both of these. Nuclear fusion research continues around the world, including at UC Berkeley, but the current state of the art is such that practical power from nuclear fusion is at least 30 years away (and probably much longer). Practical alternatives to fossil fuels today include solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, wind, and wave/tidal power. Geothermal energy is touted by some, but is only marginally practical in the best of circumstances and can have undesirable environmental effects. Fission nuclear power is highly infeasible given the high negatives of multi-dimensional danger to the public and prohibitive nuclear waste storage costs.
- *Hazardous Materials:* AB 1946 passed the legislature August 19, and was sent to the governor for signature. The bill reforms state law by allowing State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards to refer cases of water code violators to local district attorneys and large city attorneys to bring a civil action or to petition the superior court to

impose, assess and recover civil penalties for violations of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

- *Land Use:* During the Torrance General Plan Workshop #18 August 27 on the Draft Housing Element, Lola Ungar spoke on concerns with the Element, which she felt should reflect and complement the 2008 Strategic Plan Committee's most recent findings and:
 - not just promote green building but require green building;
 - provide for more parking at condominium development because current condominium parking requirements for multi-family development are woefully inadequate;
 - require more private open space for multi-family development because as prescribed (600 square feet of private open space for each dwelling unit) it is also inadequate;
 - recognize the need for low income housing and revitalization that could provide workforce housing, as the Housing Element recognizes that there are 3,000 people on a waiting list for housing; and
 - provide a Transportation Center with adjacent housing.

Kay White also requested that more effort be made to develop Section VIII Housing.

Directors and Committee Chairs

contributing to this report: Andrea Wagner (Natural Resources Director), Lola Ungar (Land Use), Rick Wagner (Energy)



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

Directors' Reports (cont'd)

Membership—by Venora Lee

Proposed Plan for Membership Renewal and Preparation of *Roster 2009*

April: Finalize renewal form with the Board

May: Email attachment to renew to e-members; hard copy to non-e-mailers

Annual Meeting--have hard copy of *Roster* for attendees

Mid-June: Hard copy of renewal forms mailed to non-paid and non-attendees at Annual Meeting

July: Calls to non-paid to be completed by July 10;

July 20-roster closed

August 1: *Rosters* and membership cards mailed

January: changes to *Roster due to General Election and new memberships sent out* to membership.

HELP!!!

We need volunteers:

- To register voters at Torrance Farmers' Market Oct. 11, 14, and 18, 8-10 am and/or 10-12 noon and at the Lomita Arts and Crafts Fair Oct. 11, 9-11 am and/or 11-1 pm.
- To help with the Gardena Candidate Forum Oct. 16, 6-9 pm.

Please contact Pat Kromka to sign up.

(*Strategic Plan, cont'd from p. 2*)

spent over 50 hours in reviewing data and thoughtfully working through the elements of the Strategic Plan.

The Results

The Committee took the following actions:

- Created a new Strategic Priority entitled "Stewardship of the Environment" based on findings in the new data.
- Comingled existing Strategic Priorities of the past that were determined to still be valid and responsive to the needs, desires and wishes of the community.
- Incorporated new goals specifically addressing Education and Ethnic Diversity to reflect the importance of these two areas as noted in the survey data.
- Added modest additions, deletions and language changes to the Goals and Subgoals to reflect progress on implementation and more active emphasis expressed by members of the community and the Committee.

Because of lapses in the past, the Committee noted throughout the update process that we needed to emphasize the regular review and renewal of the Strategic Plan based on the schedule set forth in the 1999 Strategic Plan, namely, that there be a three-year "check-up" via use of phone surveys and an environmental scan, followed by either a three-year renewal if warranted by the data, or a five-year mandatory renewal. The Committee felt very strongly that this schedule should be adhered to and that the Strategic Plan should provide an integral focus for the operation of the City.



About the League

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.

With membership comes the opportunity to work with well-informed, grassroots activists on a broad range of public policy concerns. The League provides members with opportunities to learn valuable, transferable skills, including how to organize and run productive meetings, write more effectively, speak in public, organize and run effective campaigns, conduct research studies, and coordinate general civic leadership training.

League of Women Voters of California News

League Recommendations for the November 4, 2008 General Election

LWVC has taken a stand on 10 of the 12 propositions on the general election ballot. League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, and Proposition 12, Veterans Bond Act of 2008, therefore, the LWVC is taking no stand on these measures. LWVC's stand on Propositions 3 -6 were printed in the August LWVT Voter. LWVC's stand on Propositions 9 and 11 will appear in the October LWVT Voter. All are on the LWVC website.

PROP 1A Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act--SUPPORT

This \$9.95 billion bond act would partially fund a high-speed train project between Los Angeles/Anaheim and San Francisco, and possible extensions to Sacramento and to San Diego, at a total project cost of \$45 billion, including the additional segments. Federal grants and public-private partnerships would be needed to fund at least half of each segment. Proposition 1A would provide a transportation option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and lessens the need to expand highways and airports. This revised proposition addresses concerns about cost and financial uncertainties by requiring a new business plan, peer review, and other accountability provisions, and it allows bond funds to be used for the other segments if there is no negative impact on the first phase.

PROP 7 Renewable Energy Generation--OPPOSE

Proposition 7 requires all utilities, including government-owned utilities, to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2025. While the League supports a renewable energy target, we feel this is too optimistic to be achieved, and well beyond the targets for implementing the landmark greenhouse-gas emissions reduction law, AB 32. Moreover, Prop 7 is poorly drafted. Experts say it will not achieve its stated goals and will actually disrupt the development of renewable power. It will force small renewable energy companies out of California's market and cause higher energy bills.

PROP 8 Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry--OPPOSE

This proposed limitation of marriage as only between a man and a woman infringes on the equal rights that should be available to all people. The California Supreme Court has concluded that there is a "fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship." The League opposed Proposition 22 in 2000 and continues to oppose such limits on the basic civil rights that should be guaranteed to all Californians.

President Hirohama Urges Budget and Finance Reform

On August 21, Janis Hirohama, president of LWVC, wrote to Don Perata, President pro Tempore of the California State Senate, regarding the development of a state budget. The letter is available on the LWVC website and ends with the following:

We urge the Legislature to make difficult choices and come together on a budget that will minimize damaging cuts this year and then to move on to a serious consideration of our budget process and finance system. This year once again shows the consequences of a process and system that is widely recognized as dysfunctional. Californians have a right to expect their leaders to take on the task of improving it.



Every car counts!

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or boat to the League of Women Voters.**

Call 800 320.0476

**League of Women Voters of California
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We'll pick it up. You'll support the League, get a tax deduction and avoid the headache of disposing of an unwanted vehicle.

League of Women Voters of the United States News

Debate Watching 101

As the presidential election approaches, candidates will be appearing in televised debates. LWVUS has prepared Debate Watching 101 on the LWVUS website to help viewers get the most out of the debates.

Following are excerpts.

... voters need to view debates with a careful eye to get the most information. Candidates rehearse thoroughly for debates, making it hard to get candid, spontaneous answers. Debates can emphasize form over substance, such as the candidates' appearance instead of their stands on the issues. You may watch a debate and still not get answers to the questions you have about the candidates and issues.

You can get the most out of a debate by thinking about the issues and candidates in advance, by viewing the debate with care, and by continuing to research the issues and the candidates after the debate...

LWVUS urges viewers to familiarize themselves before the debate with the candidates and the issues and during the debate to ask themselves a number of questions, among them:

- Does the format give each candidate an equal opportunity to speak and respond to questions?
- Are the questions clear, fair and equally tough on all candidates?
- Do the questions cover the issues that are important to you?

Do the candidates

- answer questions directly, or do they evade them or fail to answer the specific question?
- give specifics about their stands on the issues, or do they speak in generalities? Do they support their positions and arguments with facts and figures?
- talk about their own policies and positions, or do they mostly attack their opponents?
- [make realistic proposals?] Can they actually carry out the promises they are making?
- appear sincere, confident and relaxed?
- show how their backgrounds and experience qualify them to hold the office?

- Are their answers consistent with their previous positions, and if not, do they explain why?
- What image are they trying to create?
- Do their responses appear overly rehearsed or "canned"?

Debate Watching 101 goes on to describe how to judge the media and how viewers can help clarify their thoughts after the debate, for example, by "identifying the issues on which you agree with a candidate and those on which you disagree, and deciding whether that makes you more or less likely to vote for a particular candidate." For the complete text, go to www.lwv.org, and for additional information to



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>

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.

2008 Calendar

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Sept 4, 7pm | Board Meeting |
| Sept. 20, 9-11am | Tri-League Kickoff Breakfast Buffet, Marie Callender's, 21211 Hawthorne Blvd |
| Sept. 27 | County Ballot Briefing TBD |
| Oct. 2, 7pm | Board Meeting (Call for location) |
| Oct. 16, 6-8pm | Gardena City Council Candidate Forum, Nakaoka Community Center |
| Oct. 20 | Last day to register to vote |
| Nov. 4 | Election Day |
| Nov. 6, 7 pm | Board Meeting (Call for location) |
| Dec. 4 | Board Meeting and Holiday Potluck, TBD |



League of Women Voters of Torrance

Serving Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita and Torrance

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