

SPECIAL EDITION
NEWSLETTER
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VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES

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President's Message

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little."

Edmund Burke



In the face of defining, understanding, or helping to shape public policy and participation in government, many feel even casting a vote is too onerous or meaningless. Burke's truth has a corollary which daily plays out in the Los Angeles League of Women Voters: One cannot err who does a little in the face of great tasks, for a little, shared by many, accomplishes and sustains much.

The founder of the League's Los Angeles chapter, Dora Fellows Haynes, embodied this truth when she set the course to educate new women voters about the political process in the 1920's. As a member driv-

en and directed organization, the League now embraces men and women and embodies opportunity for making significant community-wide impact. This impact builds through the work of individual members; committees of members; and alliances with other shared-issue groups.

women, and Dora Haynes' efforts to extend the organizational structure for widening citizen participation in Los Angeles' government are complete. But oh, there is so much yet to be done!

Performing as a member of the League is an energizing, collegial journey in making a difference. Becoming a member of the League is the first small step that assures avoiding the error of doing nothing, because one can do only a little.



Dora Fellows Haynes, Founder
LWV, Los Angeles, 1920

"League membership provides opportunities for personal and professional development through substantive civic engagement"

At the turn of the Twentieth Century, Susan B. Anthony lamented, "Oh, if I could but live another century and see the fruition of all the work for women! There is so much yet to be done." Those hundred years have expired; the work initiated to extend the vote to



Hot Topics-Cold Facts, ballot measure presentation at UCLA 11/05, (past president, Xandra Kayden)

The Los Angeles League

LWV is Plaintiff in LAUSD AB 1381 Lawsuit

LWV of L.A. believed this legislation bypassed provisions of the state constitution, and the city charter, as well as residents with the greatest stake in LAUSD reform. Moreover, it created a governance structure lacking direct lines of authority and accountability.

Resolving the constitutional basis of the reform plan before implementation was crucial, so that its very legitimacy did not join the many other impediments to better education for LAUSD students.



Member Jean Cohen speaks out at a "Reform Our Schools" panel organized by the San Fernando Valley Economic Alliance, hosted by the Los Angeles Times.

League continues to monitor and speak out on behalf of education and governance issues guided by its positions.

Use SmartVoter.org and BE a Smart Voter on State and Local Elections



"Hot Topics - Cold Facts," ballot measure presentation at USC, 11/05 members, Frances Talbott-White, Cecilia Schlesinger, Jean Thomson, Lynn Crandall, Estelle Markowitz

Need more information about the candidates and issues on your ballot? A visit to www.SmartVoter.org will be an eye-opening experience.

All candidates are invited to post a virtually unlimited amount of candidate information on Smart Voter for free, if it complies with League standards of accurate, positive campaigning.

Smart Voter is an on line voter service provided by LWVC Education Fund and

Educates

is implemented and staffed by members from local and county Leagues.

Go to www.SmartVoter.org for all city, county and state-wide election information in California. Even LAUSD Board Member, judicial, and L.A. Community College Board of Trustees candidates are posted.

Increasingly, voters are finding their way to Smart Voter via Google and other popular search engines. Once they use Smart Voter in any single election, they continue to seek out this reliable new service provided by LWVC.

Type in your address and zip code at www.SmartVoter.org to bring up data on your personal ballot for current elections and clickable links to in-depth resources.

For more information about Smart Voter, contact Frances Talbott-White, 310/397-4970, ca-south@smartvoter.org.

Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government, A League Education Fund Highlight

The greatly expanded update of the League's 42 year old

The Education Fund's board of directors, which includes business and professional leaders as well as current and former members of the League's board, raises tax-deductible funds to support the League's educational, non-advocacy efforts. The Ed Fund board seeks corporate

Informs

reference guide, written by Cal State Fullerton political science professor, Raphael Sonenshein,



Photo by Jerry Gotlieb

Education Fund Chair Evon Gotlieb (3rd from l.) and Cal State Fullerton political science professor and author of *Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government*, Raphael Sonenshein, Ph.D. (far left) presented 6,800 copies of the book to the City Council. Also pictured are (l. to r.) City Council President Eric Garcetti, League past-presidents Jane Goichman and Renee Chanon, and City Councilmember Tom LaBonge.

Ph.D., was overseen and edited by a League committee and

and individual gifts, grants, bequests, and sponsorships. It manages the Civic Society, composed of donors at the \$1,000 level, for whom salons are offered during the year to hear noteworthy speakers on timely topics.

Empowers

funded through a generous grant from the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation. Nearly 14,000 copies have been provided free of charge to the city, the school district, community colleges, neighborhood councils, organizations and individuals who want to learn how our city's government works.

A prime example of our fundraising activities is our annual "Celebrating Leadership" awards dinner. The 2007 event at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel, honored Councilwoman Jan Perry, civic leader Irene Hirano, Maersk Line, Univision and the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation.

Los Angeles: Structure of City Government is Launched

The National Center for the Preservation of Democracy was the site of a reception and program, on October 25, 2006, to unveil the totally revised version of, *Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government*, written by Raphael J. Sonenshein, Ph.D. The Structure committee; Sonenshein; the League's grantor, the Haynes Foundation;

Sonenshein focused on the great "distances"—physical and psychological—separating our community; making it difficult to govern. Examples cited: 1) Residents of the Valley don't see or know much about the central city on a first-hand basis. 2) Central city folks don't see or know much about the Harbor area of the city. 3) The city's physical distances constitute a governance challenge. Likewise cited were huge psychological distances i.e. the gap between individuals on skid row and the mayor or members of

government to address, or properly implement, long-term solutions to core problems. Olney had to close the program before the enthusiastic audience could pose all its questions. The audience left pleased to have participated with major community thinkers and players.

Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government is the result of years of hard work by Sonenshein, the support team of Richard Dickinson, Mark Drayse, and Margi Denton, and League committee: Carryl Carter, Renee Chanon, Jane Goichman, Evon Gotlieb and Sandy Wolber. Special thanks to Julie Rajan, who initiated this effort, and League's Administrative Director, Ellen Glettner, for supporting the launch and



Author, Raphael Sonenshein; Moderator, Warren Olney and Attorney, Connie Rice

representatives from event sponsors: the Gas Company and O'Melveny & Myers, LLP; members of the League and the L. A. community engaged in a forum on central issues not addressed by its governance structure alone.

A panel discussion titled: *Loose Ends: Los Angeles Government in the 21st Century* was moderated by Warren Olney, Executive Producer of KCRW's "To the Point" and "Which Way LA." Panelists Sonenshein, Connie Rice of The Advancement Project, and William Deverell, USC Professor of History and Director of Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, informed the audience and answered questions.



Panelist, Connie Rice of the Advancement Project

the city council located only a few blocks away from skid row.

Dr. Deverell noted *Structure* is in the spirit of Dora Haynes (the first president of the Los Angeles League) and John Randolph Haynes, progressives of the early 20th century, because it aims to educate voters. Rice noted that Los Angeles is difficult to govern and has many *Loose Ends*, because it does not have a governance or community structure in place that requires



Jane Pisano, president of John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation

distributing the book. Thanks and everlasting gratitude to the Haynes Foundation for their grant to underwrite the project and to provide books, free of charge, to organizations and individuals.

Jane C.L. Goichman

CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP AWARDS DINNER

February 28, 2007 at the Omni Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles

Plan now to attend the League's 2007 "Celebrating Leadership" Awards Dinner, Wed., February 28, 2007!

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and LA County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, District 3, will serve as Honorary Chairs. Honorees receiving this year's Carrie Chapman Catt Awards:

- The Political Leadership Award to Councilwoman Jan Perry, representing the 9th Council District
- The Corporate Leadership Award to shipping company, Maersk Line
- The Civic Service Leadership Award to Irene Y. Hirano of the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy and the Japanese American National Museum
- The Voter Participation Leadership Award to Univision KMEX 34
- The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation will receive the League's Founders' Award.

For further event information and how you can assist, please contact the League's event coordinator, Melissa Richardson Banks (213) 972-0884, or Ellen Glettner and Carryl Carter at the League office (213) 368-1616.

Judicial Independence Forum at Loyola Law School, 2007

CA Supreme Court Associate Justice, Carlos Moreno, served as luncheon keynote speaker. The morning panel delved into pressures on the judges/justices from external and internal forces. Judge Terry Smerling moderated the panel consisting of Loyola Dean David Burcham and Professor at Law Allan Ides,

Justices Joan Dempsey Klein and Candace Cooper who addressed concerns that groups, inside and outside government, have gradually increased influence on judges for favorable decisions for special interests. That the goal of total impartiality in decision making is difficult to maintain given current pro-

cedure for campaign funding was also discussed.

The afternoon panel featured judges, media, and involved experts discussing ways to mitigate pitfalls and suggest creative solutions to ensure the judicial branch remains a third independent branch of government. Appellate Justice Norman Epstein moderated the panel. Members were Judge Harold Cherness, Attorneys John Van de Kamp and Stephen Rohde, Professor Cruz Reynoso of Davis

Law School, and Jo-Ann Grace, publisher of *Metropolitan News*.

The Beverly Hills Bar Association provided eligible attendees an opportunity for certification. Five Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) credits could be earned by forum attendees as approved by the requirements of the State Bar of California.

Jean Thomson



Panelist Belinda Smith Walker, President, The Girls and Gangs Mentoring Program with panelist, Probationer/USC MSW candidate, Luis Garcia



L.A. County Probation Commissioner, Gabriella Holt, LAPD Assistant Chief, Jim McDonnell and Bob Taylor. The League's programs provide opportunities to be heard by all voices on all issues. Through our programs LWV of L.A. generates strategic alliances with other organizations city-wide



Program Chair Jean Thomson at the USC IGM Art Gallery with 15 member panel at Revolving Door II Socratic discussion on L.A. County Probation Department's judicial and legislative procedures

Health Insurance Reform A Priority in 2007

LWV of L.A. actively participated with Health Care For All in the OneCareNow campaign for SB 840 by educating and activating



Jean Thomson and Margie Engel, advocating for League positions

members at Unit meetings and helping to organize

campaign events in Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Culver city and San Fernando Valley.

In February, Senator Sheila Kuehl, Chair of the Senate Health Committee, will reintroduce SB 840.

This single payer bill will be compared with the bills submitted by the Governor, Senator Perata, and Assmbllymember Nunez. When comparing, use the following criteria:

- 1) Does it cover all residents?
- 2) Is there one risk pool or many?
- 3) Is the coverage comprehensive?
- 4) Is the coverage continuous?
- 5) How will the costs be contained over time?
- 6) How will it be funded?

Now that the spotlight is on health insurance reform, there will be many opportunities for League and the voters they inform, empower and educate to make a difference statewide.

Cecilia Schlesinger and Doris Nelson

Proposition R is Law

Proposition R, a ballot measure written by the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, is a reform package designed to renew a balance of power. It increases the influence of voters with their representatives and decreases the influence of other, non-elected interests, such as lobbyists, long term staff, and special interests. Its ten elements encompass extending term limits from two to three years for city council members; restricting lobbying; and requiring more disclosure with regard to independent expenditures and contributions to campaigns. Proposition R became law after 59% of the voters agreed in the November 2006 election.

2006 Events

Forums:

Home Land Security - Emergency Preparedness in the Community

Based on extensive interviews and a panel discussion of experts. League educated the public at the Metropolitan Transit Authority Building and created its report.

Revolving Door II

LWV member Fran Lapidés moderated a panel discussion of the process from original offense to rehabilitation in our criminal justice system. Panelists included: Kim McGill, probationer; Luis Garcia, probationer; Cdr. Richard Varrantes, LASD; Leslie Kenyon, District Attorney; Lee Tsao, Public Defender; Judge Terry Smerling, Judge Rudy Diaz, Robert Taylor, Chief Probation Officer; Gabriella Holt,

Pres. Probation Commission; Virginia Snapp, Chief Deputy Officer L.A. County Probation Dept.; Belinda Smith Walker, Girls & Gangs; Arturo Flores, Deputy Probation Officer; Mary Weaver, Friends Outside; Lisa Alegria/Sara Pineda, Pacific Lodge; Eva McCraven, Hillview Mental Health. Held at the USC IGM Art Gallery, this Socratic discussion was taped and aired by Dorothy Barton of *On Target*.

See photos p. 4

Hot Topics - Cold Facts

In collaboration with California Common Cause, UCLA Law School Program in Public Interest Law and Policy, and the Easy Voter Guide, LWV of L.A. present-

ed this two-part, in-depth forum on the November 7 ballot measures with a panel of presenters spanning the political spectrum discussing reasons to support or oppose at UCLA's Law School.

Pro & Con and Candidate Forum

presented by LWV of L.A. and the Women's Organization Coalition this forum included candidates for assembly in the San Fernando Valley and a Pro & Con presentation of selected ballot measures held at Pierce College in Woodland Hills.

Interviews:

Judicial Candidate Interviews

In collaboration with LWV of Los Angeles County, LWV of L.A. helped conduct interviews of judicial candidates running for offices of the Superior Court in

Los Angeles County. These were broadcast on local cable stations.

Training:

Get Prepared: Emergency Preparedness in conjunction with the Los Angeles Fire Department, LWV of L.A. invited the public to be trained in emergency preparedness at the Tillman Reclamation Center, Sepulveda Basin.

Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government

launched (Article, p. 3)

Unit Meetings:



Unit Meetings – Monthly discussions take place in all ten units throughout Los Angeles

LWV Los Angeles IN ACTION

2007 Calendar

January 27, 2007

Forum on Judicial Independence,

Loyola Law School, Los Angeles. (Article, p. 4)

February 28, 2007

Annual Carrie Chapman Catt Leadership Awards Dinner.

(Box, p. 2)

March 23, 2007

Workshop - Running and Winning

A collaborative project between LWV of L.A., the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and the Constitutional Rights Foundation. The goal of the project is to raise the sense



Zhita Rea, organizer of this collaborative project, *Running and Winning*.

of political awareness and empowerment and encourage positive leadership of high school students from diverse

communities. The high school students will conduct a mock campaign based upon a selected issue. Funding provided by Verizon.

May 2007

Forum -

Is L.A. Any Safer?

Third in the Homeland Security series.

June 2007

Forum - Recidivism in the L.A. Criminal Justice System

Third in the Revolving Door series.

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**It's easy to join the League of Women Voters Los Angeles.
Everyone is welcome. Find information on our website:
www.lwvlosangeles.org or call the office 213-368-1616**

Membership in LWV Los Angeles provides you opportunities to:

- Gain knowledge and experience through study and discussion of timely and important topics
- Contribute valuable service to the community; make a positive difference
- Help develop community legacy
- Discover new interests; develop substantive skills; learn about crucial community issues
- Meet colleagues who share your interests: make contacts and develop lasting friendships through substantive community service

The League of Women Voters has taken positions on public issues for many years. We continue to add new positions to our advocacy agenda at every level of governmental organization. Positions are established after members study issues of public significance and agree on policies and practices that best serve the public interest. Positions are periodically reviewed for current

relevance. Without study and consensus, League has no position and takes no stand. Positions are adopted by the National, State of California, Los Angeles County, and Los Angeles City Leagues on many issues. LWV of L.A., encompassing Culver City, West Hollywood, Westlake, Calabasas and Las Virgenes School District, has positions on the following issues:

- Cable Television
- Child Care
- City Government
- Civil Service
- Community College District
- Education
- Government Structure
- Homelessness
- Housing
- Library
- Open Space
- Planning
- Police
- Recreation and Parks
- Transit
- Voting Rights
- Waste Management
- Waste-Water Management

For more information on the League's positions, go to www.lwvlosangeles.org link ACTION.

