

August  
2008



# THE VOTER

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ANGELES

Members meet in units: Crenshaw • Culver City • Las Virgenes • Los Feliz/Silverlake • Pacific Palisades • San Fernando Valley West/North • Sunland/Tujunga • University/Westside • Westside Evening

### Upcoming Events

- August 5: Board Retreat
- September 1: Labor Day Holiday  
LWVLA Office Closed
- October 20: Last Day to Register for November 4
- November 4: General Election
- March 4 '09: **Save the Date!** Celebrating Leadership Awards Dinner

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization open to all men and women. The League's purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The end of Spring is when League turns over new ground and prepares for the next full year. Part of the preparation for the future is acknowledging the challenges and the accomplishments of the past. For those who did not attend Annual Meeting in June, you will find reports describing last year's achievements in our core areas of Action/Advocacy, Program Voter Service, and Education Fund on the website [www.LWVLosangeles.org](http://www.LWVLosangeles.org) at "ABOUT LWV."

The message I shared at Annual Meeting about our future said in part that it has been a year of great achievement but also a year filled with challenges. There have been soundings from other levels of League that we need to pay great attention to. We are hastening toward the same imperative to recognize and strategize about change that newspapers, political parties, environmental policy makers, religious organizations, stock market analysts and people who commute long distances to work are attempting to second guess.

At LWVCA Leadership Council our National President, Mary Wilson, and our State President, Janis Hirohama, spoke on the themes of Bridging to The Future... and evaluating what works in an organization's life ...and where that knowledge can take us in the future. Both were upbeat but the message was: be prepared for change by working toward integrating League with that change. This year the stakes are very high for our League. We must focus on how our fundamental changes in membership and leadership as well as the means for moving our mission forward, can accommodate the way our world is changing.

In January this year the LWVLA Board and others who have been leaders in our organization met in retreat to begin to understand and form a plan relevant to the two great issues that must concern a membership-driven organization – attrition in membership and attrition in members who rise to leadership roles. We are not alone in this – a month ago, LWVUS President Mary Wilson outlined the decline in membership for League of Women Voters, with much being attributed to the loss of our oldest members. She lauded the Membership Recruitment Initiative that National has put into place for two years now, targeting 10 local Leagues in the first year and 5 state Leagues in the second year. This focused effort has shown success of 9% to 33% increase in membership of those local Leagues.

What is in our future for 2008-2009? Our coming year will be a typical League year of much opportunity to move our mission forward. Our local program will engage us in consensus and position forming, as well as education and advocacy. We will have LWVC areas of emphasis to assist with in health, redistricting reform, campaign finance reform, budget reform and education. Our delegates attending National Convention have reported in this VOTER about much that will engage us at the local level. In Los Angeles, we will have a national and mayoral election as platforms for moving our voter service activity into high gear. We will be very busy in 2008-2009.

But to move back to the theme of change, it seems clear that as a partner to what we will focus on this next year for program, LWVLA (with all Leagues) must in addition find the strategies that will allow us to function as a member-driven organization in the face of growing competition for support dollars, changes in demographics that supported our traditional membership base and advances in technology that require new skills and adequate technology. How do we change successfully?

We must recruit new members with a modern plan for them to participate. We need your help. We are limping when we need to be running. Help identify people within your unit or your network of League colleagues

who will help lead and assist in our membership initiative. National has provided the tools; we need two or three people who can pick these tools up and organize us for harvesting a new crop of Leaguers. We must also recruit other leaders from our membership who want to step into roles of responsibility such as membership and action chairs.

In addition, we must plan for our sustainable financial future. To do this, the Board approved in April: seeking funding and putting a committee together committed to this strategizing process. The committee is formed, now we need, and we intend, to seek funding to help us plan for our new future.

-- *Liza White*

**There is a new A.D. at the LWVLA!  
Swing by and say Hi!**

**Meet our new  
Administrative Director**

***Raquel Beltrán*  
Office Hours  
Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**



**ELECTRONIC, TIMELY, SAVE-A-TREE  
COMMUNICATON: All you ever wanted to  
know about LWVLA E-Unit and E-Announce**

LWVLA has two list serves, E-Unit ([lwvlaeu@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:lwvlaeu@yahoogleroups.com)) and E-Announce ([lwvlaannounce@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:lwvlaannounce@yahoogleroups.com)). The aim of both list serves is to inform members about events in a timely manner, but they each serve different purposes.

The E-Unit is available to all LWVLA members and some invited guests (i.e. LWV presidents, etc.). The E-Unit contains event information, thank yous, announcements, League queries and issues, articles, weekly LWVLA updates,

personal League memories and League discussion. Action alerts and advocacy requests are also posted on the e-list. *All members of the E-Unit are allowed to post mail on the E-Unit.*

The E-Announce is only available to LWVLA members. Event information that is deemed to be of interest to League members is posted. The events are not necessarily sponsored by organizations that we would team with but usually there is overlap. The content on E-Announce is educational or informational, but NOT advocacy. Members receive messages from E-Announce but may not respond to this information. *The only members that are allowed to post information on E-Announce are the President of LWVLA, the Administrative Director and the moderator.*

Now let's get down to the basics. How do you join these groups? As of late, there has been a problem with many of the Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Mail from any list serve is sometimes considered SPAM and therefore not delivered. To try to get around this problem, please follow these steps:

- Put all of the following addresses in your address book [\\_hrterris@yahoo.com](mailto:hrterris@yahoo.com), [lwvlaeu@yahooogroups.com](mailto:lwvlaeu@yahooogroups.com), and [lwvlaannounce@yahooogroups.com](mailto:lwvlaannounce@yahooogroups.com).
- E-mail me, Helene Terris ([hrterris@yahoo.com](mailto:hrterris@yahoo.com)), when this has been completed. Tell me which group or groups you'd like to join.
- I will send you an 'Invitation' to join the specific group(s).
- I will also send you an email that the Invitation has been sent.
- *If you do not get the invitation within 24 hours of my notifying you that the information has been sent – check your junk, deleted and SPAM mailboxes. That's where one member found her invitations!*
- When you get this invitation, please select 'subscribe' to complete the process.

I look forward to a deluge of emails to me requesting membership in both the E-Unit and E-Announce. That's the best way to keep current on what's happening in LWVLA.

-- Helene Terris  
**Moderator E-Unit and E-Announce**

### REPORT FROM LWVUS CONVENTION: Portland, June15-17, 2008

Members who attend the biennial LWVUS Convention as delegates are very busy. There is administrative business to attend to, program to debate and adopt, and opportunities to expand your knowledge on a wide range of topics.

**Administrative:** This year the Board of Directors was elected with no nominations from the floor. The **budget and proposed PMP** payments (\$28 for 2008/9 and \$29.20 for 2009/10) were approved as presented. There were questions about the budget: concerns that development funds are not well spent (\$2 spent fetches \$1 received – they argue this will improve but that was what was said two years ago); only 23% of the budget is met with PMP. The rest comes through gifts and grants which for the most part cannot be used for action or lobbying.

**Program:** The Board recommended and the members approved “**a Health Care program to educate members** and communities in order to be better prepared to do health advocacy as needed”. We were surprised to learn that only 268 Leagues (out of a total of 805) participated in program planning this year and, of those, 55 recorded ‘no recommendation’. Not recommended but brought to Convention and approved by members was a motion to adopt “a Multi-Level Education and Advocacy **Campaign to promote solutions to global climate change**”.

A number of Leagues proposed **resolutions. Those that were approved** were:

A motion to **amend the Principles** by adding “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all the powers of the US government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial.”

A motion to **study** “The advisability of using the **National Popular Vote compact** among the states as a method of electing the President”. YES, means that we will be doing a national study this year.

A motion calling for “A **resolution procedure shall be proposed by LWVUS** for discussion at Council 2009 as a possible rule for Convention 2010.” This means that the Board must propose a process for bringing resolutions from local Leagues to Convention and for adopting them as separate from the program planning process.

The members did **not approve**:

the requested concurrence to create a national position on redistricting, an issue of extreme interest to California members with our Voters First initiative coming before the voters this fall;

a resolution to allow members to participate in setting national action priorities through the planning process and at Convention;

a resolution to put “citizen” back in our statement of purpose;

a resolution to establish a Task Force on Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament,

a resolution further defining paper ballots and audits for elections.

There were a total of 11 **bylaws amendments** proposed. Most of the bylaws amendments that passed can be categorized as house-keeping and provide for easier administration of the organization. Those that didn't pass were aimed at changing the way the organization operates, such as ones relating to program decisions and action at the local level.



The Rules of Convention are established at the first plenary session. In advance of this Convention, the Board proposed an addition to the **Rules of Convention** that established rules for the introduction and **consideration of resolutions (Rule 10.1)**. Resolutions have been seen both as a way for local Leagues to have better input to a constraining program planning process but also as a way to possibly circumvent the program planning process itself. Some elements of 10.1

were seen as helpful (requiring resolutions be sent to all local League presidents four weeks in advance of Convention) and appropriate (requiring the bringer of the resolution to be registered to attend Convention) and some were seen as possibly designed to interfere with bringing resolutions at all. A committee to review resolutions and possibly deny hearing of some based on ‘guidelines’ such as ‘does not circumvent the program planning process’ and ‘can be implemented within the existing resources of the League’ were considered. The basic structure of 10.1 was retained but all ‘conditions’ were deleted from the rule. The motion that a resolutions procedure be proposed by LWVUS for future convention discussion and approval grew out of consideration of Rule 10.1.

**Education:** Going to National Convention is in itself an educational experience but in addition, there are always caucuses on a broad range of topics and workshops offered by LWVUS. Our members participated in sessions on **health care (Massachusetts)** experience has not been all rosy), **getting the word out** (know your media and audience), **engaging young voters**, standing up for **strong courts** (election v. merit, inspectors general to oversee judges), **growing membership** (surveys show people do not know what we do, and we need a consistent message), getting serious about **climate change** (what the National League has done), **election integrity** and a **tour of Portland's** elections division with a focus on their **vote by mail process**.

One of the more interesting moments at Convention is at the very end when delegates make their Recommendations to the Board. One recommendation was that all recommendations be posted on the LWVUS website. Others included: host presidential debates, create young leaders award, allow local Leagues to lobby their national representatives (and establish process for getting permission), allow members a process for setting action priorities, improve usability of website, etc. We are hoping they take the recommendations and post them all, because they represent an array of interesting action items from the grassroots to our National Board,

but by the end of National Convention no one had the energy to process them all.

**--Margie Engel and Jean Thomson  
Delegates, LWVUS National Convention**

**LEAGU-OIRES: Six-Word Memoires...  
of League Members**

I first read about six-word memoirs in a February 2008 *New Yorker* article. Since then a number of LWVLA members have submitted their Leagu-oires – a concise expression of how League has impacted their lives.

An example: Irma Silverstein: *Got my Civics PhD from LWV*

This month member Barbara Vogel submitted several Leagu-oires and said: “The first two apply to me. Nothing like belonging to LWV when you move to a new community to learn about the community and find new friends.”

“Joined LWV, four communities, instant friends.”  
“Joined LWV, fifty years, LLBoard meetings” (LLBoard = Local League Board)  
“Confusing news, joined LWV, less confusion.”

Please send your Leagu-oire to  
**LWVLA\_President@sbcglobal.net**

**-- LIZA WHITE**

**WATCH THAT WATER**



Water experts in California agree that the most adverse impact of climate change on the state is likely to be a reduction in available water supply. Even without climate change, annual variations in rain and snow have occurred throughout history and many water experts believe that water allocations throughout the West have been based on unusually wet years rather than average conditions.

Drought conditions of varying intensities have been experienced in the West for the past several years. In the Colorado River Basin,

water levels in Lakes Mead and Powell have dropped significantly. Heavier than usual levels of snow and rain in many areas of the west this year gave a temporary reprieve. However, water reserves will not return to pre-drought conditions on one year’s heavy snowfall, and the drought is expected to resume and continue for many years.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, preparing for potentially reduced water supplies or a very hot summer which would cause heavier than normal water use, issued mandatory restrictions this year. These were sent to all households and businesses in Los Angeles. As a reminder, we are repeating them here.

**YOU CANNOT:**

- Use water on hard surfaces such as sidewalks, walkways, driveways, or parking lots (with the exception of water brooms).
- Water lawns between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., April 1 to September 30 and between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., October 1 to March 31.
- Allow excess water from sprinklers to flood gutters.
- Use water to clean, fill or maintain decorative fountains unless the water is part of a recirculation system.
- Serve water to customers in eating establishments, unless requested.
- Allow leaks to go unattended.

**-- Jo Anne Aplet  
Member, LWVLA Green Committee**

**LWV LOS ANGELES ANNUAL MEETING**

**June 7, 2008 - Sportsmen’s Lodge Hotel**

With the theme of “Planting Our Seeds for Next Year,” over 70 members of the LA League were

given the chance to discover or re-discover *Who We Are, What We Are*, and *What We Do* at the Annual Meeting held at the Sportsmen's Lodge Hotel. As part of grassroots participation, we listened to the summary of the state of our League, reviewed actions and studies of the previous year, adopted bylaws changes and a budget and re-affirmed our program for the 2007-2009 biennium. Our five 50-year members, interns and special leaders were all recognized for their outstanding participation, and new officers and directors to the Board were elected.

Bylaws changes consisted of clarifying the number of members of the Nominating Committee and the length of term of the appointed members.

All previous positions were approved with the following enhancements: We will continue parts of 2005-2007 Program that include the study on City Finance: Revolving Door education and advocacy; and the update of the Education position. Also reaffirmed were the 2007-2009 updates on the Housing/Homelessness and the Police positions: as well as Election Integrity and Sustainable Communities/Global Warming as issues for education and advocacy. Seeking consensus on City Finance, Education, and Police positions are expected in the coming program year.

Because of the pending increases in PMP by both State and National Leagues, an increase in our local dues was approved at the new level of \$85 for individual and \$120 for household memberships.

Our special luncheon speaker, John Van de Kamp, former LA County District Attorney and California Attorney General, spoke on "Improving Our Justice System," guiding us into a proposed statewide study of the California corrections system. As the chairman of the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, created by the California State Senate, he discussed their examination of the causes of wrongful convictions and their recommendations and proposals to further ensure that the administration of criminal justice in California is

just, fair, and accurate. On June 30 the Commission will have submitted its final report with specific, detailed recommendations regarding the death penalty. Previous reports have reviewed wrongful convictions based upon eyewitness reports, false confessions, in-custody informants, inaccuracies, informant testimony, problems with forensic evidence and the DNA backlog. They have reviewed the professional responsibility of prosecutors and defense lawyers, and potential remedies of wrongful conviction. All of these reports are available on their website, [www.ccfaj.com](http://www.ccfaj.com).

It was another great meeting, great chance to catch up with friends, and learn even more about how to direct our presence in Los Angeles.

-- Jean Thomson  
Co-chair, Program



**Save the Date!**

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**League of Women Voters of Los Angeles**

**2009 Leadership Awards Dinner**

**March 4, 2009**

**Omni Los Angeles**



**FOCUS ON YOUTH AT LWVUS CONVENTION IN PORTLAND**

This June I attended my first National LWV Convention in Portland. The 700 delegates

engaged for five days in remarkable, civil discourse, and accomplished an amazing agenda. It was League-like, overwhelming, tedious, amazing! I returned more than ever proud to be a League member. As part of the LWVLA delegation that included Thea Brodtkin, Marge Engel and Jean Thomson, I was well guided. My focus was on what we have termed youth outreach.

Attending a caucus on Running and Winning, I listened to members of other Leagues describe the success of their female oriented programs. I was able to share our experience with male and female students and electeds, and our use of college interns as facilitators and research assistants. There was a great deal of interest in our intern program in general, and requests for the materials that we have developed. And there was a lot to learn from others.

**Vote 18** was a project with immediate implications for LWVLA's youth outreach. It is a model for a 45-minute role-play designed to engage and motivate high school students to vote. Arriving at the session a few moments late, I found the youthful facilitator wearing a crown. "King George" was taking students on an interactive and whirlwind journey through the history of voting. During the mock presidential election which followed, the class discussed some current hot issues and two student candidates answered questions as to their positions on these issues. Just prior to voting, 20 percent of the students, randomly selected, were sent to a corner of the room and were told, without further explanation, that they could not vote. Discussion following the voting elicited students' reactions to how it felt not to be able to vote. They were then told that they represented the 40% of the eligible US population that typically fail to vote. Following the role play, the facilitator guided students in filling out voter registration forms and reminded them how valuable their votes are.

Vote 18, the brain-child of Walt Townes, is now a non-profit ready to take its show on the road to do a series of classroom demos across the country between August and October. They will be in LA Aug 18-20. They are making their

concepts and strategies available to all through classroom demonstrations, training others as facilitators and/or giving teachers the option of doing the interactive lesson on their own.

LWVLA is considering how we might connect with this project. Currently, three interns are reviewing the materials for our consideration of training interns to make presentations to classes or groups of high school students. We also plan to introduce Vote 18 to faculty reps who participate in Running and Winning. And, long range, we hope to participate with other community groups and agencies in one of the local Vote 18 chapters that will be established to perpetuate this youth voter motivation project. LWVLA member participation is needed and welcome. Call (213) 368-1616.

*-- Zhita Rea,  
Chair, Youth Outreach Project*



### **CALIFORNIA PRISON SYSTEM – WHAT IS IT REALLY COSTING?**

LWVLA and LWV/LAC have been educating our members and the public on issues surrounding incarceration for three years. Now local Leagues throughout California are considering how to present member enthusiasm for a LWVC study of the California prison system for approval at the 2009 State Convention.

A great group of League delegates met at the LWVC Leadership Council in May 2008 to talk about the focus for the California prison study we are proposing to present to the 2009 State Convention in Long Beach. We had representation from San Diego to Redding and many Leagues in between!

It was agreed that we would probably garner the most attention for our study if we concentrate on how it affects all of us individually -- not just the inmates themselves and their families, but also society in general, taxpayers in particular. With several court cases having brought California under a federal receivership for the health of prisoners, and the additional threat of the federal

government taking over even more portions of the prison system, it seems a very timely topic for the League of Women Voters to tackle.

One of the topics to be addressed will be the full costs of the prison system in terms of fiscal as well as human costs. How much is to be allocated by the state's general fund (estimated in the current proposed budget at \$10 billion for corrections and rehabilitation programs)? Who determines how the federal receivership funds are being spent, or the previously issued \$7 billion in "lease revenue" bonds or the additional request for another \$7 billion plus? What will shifting the supervision of state parolees and other nonviolent juvenile offenders to the local counties mean to the counties? The Legislative Analyst indicates that \$142 million in new spending for the next fiscal year will relate specifically to the federal court orders and settlements. Additional proposals relate to AB 900 for expanding rehabilitation programs.

We thought a comparison of the costs of rehabilitation programs vs. incarceration, a review of peripheral costs such as foster care and other costs to a family would be important. We also discussed looking into the sentencing guidelines, a comparison with other states, a "best practices" review of what other communities have found beneficial. There are many proposals for releasing prisoners early which need thoughtful consideration. A wealth of material is available from which to gather much of the research and we considered whom a Prison Study committee would like to interview.

With the new state LWV study guidelines, we must begin our process by establishing a study committee, a proposed budget for the study and of course a plan for (and acquisition of) the funding. All who are interested are welcome! I will try again to get a list-serve where everyone interested may participate and share their thoughts.

To get started, we will review what League positions exist already that we can share. In fact the LWV North and Central San Mateo County have already shared a position they currently have. Are there others out there that we can

work with? Please share your thoughts by calling (213) 368-1616.

**-- Jean Thomson**  
**Chair, Prison Study Exploratory Committee**

**MEMBERSHIPS & CONTRIBUTIONS**

**NEW MEMBERS**

Raquel Beltrán  
Susan Wu  
Samuel M. Sperling  
Julie Winn  
Mel Wynn  
Royce Menkus

**CIVIC SOCIETY**

Nancy Arnheim  
Renee Chanon  
Caroline Cooperman  
Mildred Ratner

Melissa Gottlieb – *Happy 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday!*  
*Gift from her Aunt Carryl Carter*

**TRIBUTES**

In honor of Nima Long  
...Sydelle Freeman ...Connie Schiff  
...Helene Terris ...University-Westside Unit

In honor of Renee & Eddie Chanon's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
...Barbara Archibald ...Connie Schiff

In honor of Helaine Blatt  
...James & Ada Horwich

In Memory of Marilyn Ryan  
...Joy Picus ...Betty Marsh ... Katherine Dunlap

In Memory of Sheldon Schuster  
... Carryl Carter

In Memory of Claire Malis  
... Betty Marsh

In Memory of Roslyn Cooperman  
... Katherine Dunlap

**EDUCATION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS**

...Paula Cohen ... Mattie Cooke Grant  
...Dorothy Curtis ... Lorraine Sax  
...Bette Simons ... Mary & James Trotter  
...Barbara Vogel ... Alfred Trumpler  
... Barbara Linden ...LWVLA Ralph's Club Shoppers

# LAPD Study Interns

## LAPD Study Interns



**LAPD Study Interns and League mentor:  
Sarah Balboa, Jean Thomson,  
Jacqueline Melissa (left to right).**

# 2008-2009 League Annual Meeting

## 2008-2009 League Annual Meeting

**(Left to Right): Cecilia Schlesinger (Nominating Committee), Barbara Braunstein, Frances Talbott-White, David Holtzman, Bertha Sutton, Elizabeth Ralston, Liza White, Jo Anne Aplet, Anne Whatley, Zhita Rea (Off-Board), Fran Lapides, Margie Engel, Jean Thomson, Donna Gotlieb, Marilyn Albertson, Joyce Batten (Nominating Committee).**



## LWVLA Leadership

**WAS THE VOTER NEWSLETTER LATE TO YOUR MAILBOX?** Help us track late deliveries. If received after the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month, Please report it to the office at (213) 368-1616.