



San Diego VOTER

Vol. 72 No. 6

Summer 2008

The Summer's activities included exciting meetings at the Local, State and National levels. This Voter will bring you up to date on all these happenings and some thoughts for our future events!

Updating City Position

At the Annual Meeting, we voted to update the position on City Government, taking another look at the Council/Manager and Strong Mayor forms of government, now that we have had experience with both.

There will be another vote in 2010 on keeping the Strong Mayor form. The Study Committee is being formed and will begin work soon. If you are interested in this topic, please join us.

The Program Committee is also interested in your input and help. We'd love to have you join that group, too, to help us plan luncheons, tours, and unit meetings.

Contact Beryl Flom, VP/Program
edflom@sbcglobal.net or 858-459-4406.

September Lunch with League



On September 24th, our Lunch with League will feature Jeff Bowman who resigned as the City of San Diego's Fire Chief due to the city's financial problems and lack of funding for up-graded equipment and additional fire-fighters.

The County League is supporting a County-wide Fire District to battle wildfires. Chief Bowman's resignation may have inspired the County Board of Supervisors and our City Council to be better prepared to handle the disastrous fires that have been occurring in the County.

Your September Voter will have all details.

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

LWVC Leadership Council Meeting

I attended the Council, which meets in the off-years when there is no LWVC Convention. It provides leadership training, updates participants in the work of LWVC, and approves the next year's budget. As always, the agenda was packed with speakers, sessions and caucuses from morning until night.

Under the direction of our Board, I worked to prevent the increase in Per Member Payment (PMP) to the state, but it was approved and another dollar was added to the \$21 we have been passing on to LWVC. LWVC actually has two budgets – one for the Education Fund, which handles their three biggest projects: Smart Voter (SV) (2.1 million hits in February), League Easy Web (LEW), a website for local Leagues, and Easy Voter which is a simplified publication on ballot measures and information on state-wide candidates.

Kay Ragan and I attended a workshop on communications, chaired by LWVC's Communications Director and her new staff member. They are bringing LWVC into the 21st century and keeping up with the fast-moving changes in public relations and news media.

Mary Wilson, President of LWVUS, spoke at the banquet, stressing that the League needs to be "edgier". Her letters and press releases are taking more controversial stands on issues and pressing for real reform.

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

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June 2008 - July 2009
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Admin. Assistant Genoveva Martinez
Flexible hours — (call ahead, please)
Phone: (858) 483-8696 FAX: (858) 483-8396

Email: lwvsd@san.rr.com

Website: www.lwvsandiego.org

SmartVoter: www.smartvoter.org

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Letter from the President

Summer is here and we're all grateful that the pace of League life has slowed down a bit. It gives all of us some welcome breathing space to reorganize, reprioritize, and regroup in preparation for a very busy year ahead. Our members' voices were unanimous and unambiguous at this year's Annual Membership meeting in electing a group of dedicated Officers and Board members -- all of whom can be counted on to promote League goals and enliven the positive working relationships that are making our city League so unique and effective.

In this month's VOTER you'll find a summary of our annual meeting. You'll also find reports on the recent National and ILO (in the ILO bulletin insert) conventions that many members attended. Be sure you don't overlook the lineup of this year's Board of Directors. You'll see that I'm sharing the job of president with the incomparable Anne Hoiberg. It's a relationship created in heaven, with great potential for increasing our San Diego League's breadth of participation and constructive clout in the affairs of our city.

Over the next few weeks the Board will be taking advantage of this calm before the storm to organize and gird ourselves for a third round of elections for San Diego voters...another exciting Lunch with League series...kicking off a much-needed update of our city governance position...increased political advocacy...much-needed fundraising efforts...the list is long. But given the status and stature of the LWVSD (rumors are that we're the second biggest League in the country!) plus the talents and significant diversity among our active members and leaders, I promise and predict a meaningful year with new opportunities for doing the right thing. Isn't that the *raison d'etre* of the LWV--- to try to improve the world? ---while we're still ready, willing, and able.

---Norma Damashek, Co- President
ndamashek@ucsd.edu / 858 459-8751



Next Voter Deadline August 18

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to informed and active public participation in government policy and decision-making. The League engages in education and advocacy on behalf of the public interest and welcomes full participation in its activities by all members of the public.

LWVSD Annual Meeting May 31, 2008

Introduction of 50-Year Members: Peggy Finch and Peg Bates, Membership Co-Chairs, introduced Joyce Tavrow as a 50-year member and presented her with a commendation, a gift of a silver dollar and League life membership. Three other recipients, June Hass, Janet Gilkeson, and Maryolive Shoupe were unable to attend. Peggy and Peg will visit them in their homes to deliver commendations.

Treasurer's Report: Christine Ahalt, treasurer, noted that it had been a more positive year financially than expected, although LWVSD still had to transfer \$10,000 from savings to cover expenses. There is concern about the future if income is not replaced. Christine emphasized a need for a Development Committee with a Chairperson in order to facilitate fundraising.

Proposed 2008-9 Program: As recommended by the Board, it was voted to retain all positions. A study to update the Mayor/City Manager position was also approved. Committee members selected are Jeanne Brown, Paula Hurst, Kathleen Hughart, Mary Jean Word, and Kay Ragan. Motions to update the following studies did not pass: Parks, Civil Service, Transportation, and Housing. Each of these could be subjects for League lunches or Unit meetings. Any group can form a committee for a mini-study, gather information, and bring it to the LWVSD Board.

Proposed 2008-9 Budget: Kathleen MacLeod, Budget Chair, presented the proposed budget. She noted that there is a 6% increase in the budget, and expenses are expected to increase further. She also noted that income from a Spring Fund Raiser is not included. Jody Tadder noted that what is not reflected is the value of all the volunteer hours given to LWVSD. Motion to approve the proposed budget with the inclusion of a President's Allowance was passed.

The bylaw changes printed in the May Voter were all adopted. The slate of officers and directors printed in the May Voter was elected.

---Sharon Allen, Secretary

How Has Being a Member of the League Shaped Your Life?

There is no better way to explain the benefits of membership than to share stories from LWV members. As part of the new LWVUS membership recruitment effort, a collection of League stories will be compiled and showcased in the LWV Storybank.

The Storybank houses wonderful stories of success and triumph from League members across the country.

We are seeking submissions from members just like you;

exceptional people who have exceptional stories. Stories should highlight the value of membership in the League, particularly personal stories of achievement and leadership

The League is a place where hands-on work leads to civic improvement ---your work has demonstrated this and sharing your story can inspire others to join in.

---- Jeanne Brown, VP/Administration, LWVUS delegate

(See page 5 for our first Storybank contribution. When will we see yours?)



Highlights of LWV National Convention June 13-17, Portland, Oregon



In beautiful Portland, your San Diego delegates, Jeanne Brown, Peggy Finch, Anne Hoiberg, Shirley Larson, and Kathleen MacLeod, participated in ALL Convention activities, from plenary sessions to workshops, caucuses, briefings, Q & A's about the budget, and receptions, sometimes going from 7:30 am to 11 pm. Somehow, we did it all!

Keynote speakers included the first woman Governor of Oregon, another former governor, John Kitzhaber, M.D., who alerted us to the crisis of "Health Care for the 21st Century"; and a panel presenting on "The State of Climate Change".

These talks and presentations in workshops provided important background information for our upcoming adopted studies: health care, climate change, and the National Popular Vote compact study. In between we cruised the exhibits, voted on many, many bylaw changes and resolutions and applauded the presentation of many awards. After much discussion, the increase in PMPs (Per Member Payments, to National and State Leagues) carried, increasing to \$28 in 2008-09 and \$29.20 in 2009-10.

My favorite workshops and caucus programs centered on universal health care, the United Nations, advocacy, a proposed U.S. Department of Peace, media, securing our world, and being a new President.

We were commended for having such a large delegation (5), which will no doubt increase in 2010 for the Atlanta Convention -- more will want to enjoy the unique LWV experience!

---Anne Hoiberg, Co-President

National Popular Vote (NPV)

Get ready for an exciting and meaningful study that was adopted at the National Convention! What is it and why are we having a study on it? Here's what's wrong with the current system for electing a president:

- ❖ Candidates are forced to focus on a small number of "battleground" states
- ❖ More than 2/3 of the states are effectively disenfranchised
- ❖ Not every vote is equal
- ❖ Voter turnout suffers in non-competitive states
- ❖ It doesn't reflect the national popular vote



NPV can fix all of these problems. The New York State League did a study on this and were told by National that they couldn't do a State Study on a National Issue. So the Convention delegates voted to have a "compact" (six-month) study. Most of the work has already been done, but we need to reach consensus, as in any other study.

NPV is a state-based plan for electing the president by popular vote, using the Electoral College. Each state that participates in the plan would award all of their electoral votes to the candidate who received the most popular votes nationwide. The plan would only take effect when it has been enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes, which is 270 of the 538. If you want to learn more, you can join us at the Common Cause/LWV meeting on July 27. (See flyer in this Voter)

---- Jeanne Brown, VP/Administration, LWVUS delegate

See page 6 for another Convention-related article.

Membership

Currently the LWVSD has 519 members!

Please welcome these new members.

NAME	ZIP	NAME	ZIP
Susan E Baer	92117	Nedra Bickel	92110
Lillian Fishman	92037	Jeff Flynn	92103
Mary Hoover	92118	Joanna Jacob	92108
Judi Ki	92064	Dr. Teri Lawton	92014
Beverly Majors	92011	Helen Marsh	92117
Deborah Mecum	91911	Mr. / Mrs. William Nyhan	92037
Shelley Plumb	92122	Judi Rosselli	92122
Mary Stephens	92106	Nancy Jane Turecek	92109
Katherine L. Zucker	92106		

La Jolla Unit Needs Your Help!

After many, many years of loyal and dedicated service to the League and especially to the La Jolla unit, Alice McCauley has retired as La Jolla unit chair. Since no one has stepped up to fulfill this vital job, the La Jolla unit is being disbanded for the foreseeable future.

Is there among you someone in that "neck of the woods" who is willing to volunteer or get a few friends together, in La Jolla or the Beach areas, and help us keep this time-honored unit together?

Please contact me for a rundown on what the job entails --- someone with a few hours a month to spare and a willingness to make some phone calls. I would be pleased to fill you in. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

---- Jody Tadder, Unit Coordinator
(858) 277-4576, jotal3@yahoo.com

Our First Contribution to the Storybank!

I came to San Diego in 1965 with my husband, a political scientist who had been hired by San Diego State. Lonely, a mother with a new baby, I found in the League a place to discuss matters of political interest and to take action. Long before I returned to college to complete my PhD, I found women who were smart and committed to important causes within the community and the country. I most remember LaDonna Hatch and Joan Dahlin, but there were many others. My work on the board gave me access to them and to discussions I was unable to have elsewhere.

Our issues in the late 60s and early 70s were the same --- and different from --- those you discuss today. We were working for the vote for the District of Columbia, as you still are, but we were also filing *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of school integration. Most of us were actively against the Vietnam War and in the streets--but we were also working for affirmative action.

It was a great period: unsettled, violent, and conflicted, and I'm very sorry to see some of our politicians looking back on it as an unfortunate period in America's history. I was fortunate to be an active League member during that time.

--- Ann M. Johns

Women's Equality Day

Eighty-eight years ago on August 26th, women throughout the U.S.A. were granted the right to vote through the ratification of the 19th Amendment, thereby ending a 72-year struggle by hundreds of thousands of suffragettes! To commemorate this important milestone, please don your marching shoes and suffrage or flapper clothes and join the Suffrage Parade and Suffrage Ball, Saturday, August 23rd, 4 pm - 9 pm. The Suffrage Parade begins at the Kate Sessions Statue at the West end of the Laurel Street Bridge (near 6th Avenue) with brief comments about women's rights, followed by a parade through Balboa Park to the Recital Hall for afternoon refreshments and demonstrations. The Suffrage Ball, which begins at 6 pm, offers food from the "roaring twenties," dancing to live music, historic re-enactments, voting demonstrations, and costume and dance contests. Participation in the Suffrage Parade is free, and the donation for the Suffrage Ball is \$35. Cosponsors with the Women's History Museum include the Women's Equity Council of the UNA, the YWCA, League of Women Voters of San Diego, and American Association of University Women (all San Diego County branches). Information and reservations: www.whmec.org or 619-233-7963.

---Anne Hoiberg, Co-President

Ranked Choice Voting -- Another Convention Discussion

This issue, also known as Instant Runoff Voting, was thoroughly discussed at the National Convention, but no action was taken. Basically, this is a process where it does matter who your 2nd or 3rd choices in an election are. The way it works is that each of us would mark on our ballot who our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices are for a certain office or issue. If no one's first choice makes it, rather than having a runoff election, the second choices of the voters whose 1st choices were less than a certain cut off point, would now be added to the two or three who tallied the most votes in the original count.

For example, in the last Presidential race, if neither John Kerry or George Bush reached 50% of the votes, then the people who voted for Ralph Nader or any of the others on the ticket would be added to whomever they marked as their 2nd choice. For our recent City Attorney race, the incumbent would have worked harder than he did for this election, if he had known there would not be a runoff.

The advantages are many:

- ❖ Saves money because there are no run-offs
- ❖ Majority rule in one election
- ❖ Sincere voting instead of strategic voting
- ❖ There is no "spoiler" effect
- ❖ It's non-partisan
- ❖ More positive campaigning
- ❖ Higher turn-out
- ❖ One person – one vote – one round of voting

Many communities already use this. Cambridge, MA, has been using it for decades. We're keeping an eye on it.

---- Jeanne Brown, VP/Administration, LWWUS delegate

LWW and Common Cause Co-Sponsor **Will We Get It Straight in '08?**

Sunday, July 27, 2008
2:00 to 4:00 pm

Topics:

- * The National Popular Vote – Voted by the National Convention to be this year’s “Compact Study”.
- * Mandatory Vote-By-Mail – Learn how Oregon votes
- * Election Integrity – How safe is our vote?
- * Voter ID – Do we have to worry about it in California?

Speakers:

Derek Cressman – Common Cause’s Assistant Director for Election Reform, visiting from Sacramento.

Deborah Seiler – Registrar of Voters, San Diego County

Location:

Mission Valley Library
2123 Fenton Parkway, San Diego 92104
(next to IKEA)



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LWVSD Diversity Policy

The LWVSD, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there should be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League of Women Voters on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. LWVSD recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. LWVSD subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. LWVSD affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its Board, staff and programs.

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 4901 MORENA BLVD.
 BLDG. 100, SUITE 104
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