



# San Diego Voter

Vol. 73 No. 3

March 2009

## **“Are the Media Serving Our Democracy... or Themselves?” “Lunch with League“, Thursday, March 19**

The days of Edward R. Morrow and Walter Cronkite are gone. The quality of the media we had growing up is no longer there. The United States is ranked 36th in the world in terms of press freedom, tied with Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Spain, and Taiwan. Tied for first are Iceland, Luxembourg, and Norway.

### **How have our media sunk to such lows?**

These questions and more will be addressed at our luncheon on March 19.

Increasingly, the media's failure to provide diverse viewpoints and unbiased information is undermining the strength of our democracy. Dissatisfaction with news coverage of events ranging from the 2000 presidential election to the war in Iraq has given media issues a new sense of urgency. The more corporate conglomerates buy up independent news outlets, the fewer voices and perspectives the public hears, and the less accountable broadcasters are to the public.

The media no longer are required to meet their obligations to serve the public by promoting diversity, accessibility, and accountability among corporations and the government agencies that regulate them. Over the years, the FCC has lessened the requirements needed for corporations to use the public airwaves for free. We now find that we have media which care more about ratings than informing the public, more about profits than depth.

Before we can work on solutions, we need to understand the problems:

### **Problem 1: Media Consolidation**

The 1996 Telecommunications Act allowed big media conglomerates to dominate markets all over the U.S. Rather than hundreds of voices and opinions writing and editing our news, three corporations are now in charge of much of the information we receive. More of us are aware that the rest of the world is getting news that we are not.

**(Continued on page 4)**

## **March Units: Update of our City Government Positions**

This issue of *The Voter* includes a Study Guide/ “Every Member Tool” (EMT) for use in the March unit discussions. Units will be considering updating some of the League's current positions on San Diego city government. Current positions to be considered are listed in the Guide as are the consensus questions. Please be sure to read the EMT and bring it with you to the meeting.

Members will be asked whether or not to change the wording found at the beginning of the positions on city government. This change would make it possible for the League to continue to work towards good government whether the city is being operated under a strong mayor/council government or a city manager/council government.

### **The current wording is:**

LWVSD supports the current Council/Manager system of government. The structure of San Diego City government should promote responsive, responsible and efficient government with adequate checks and balances of power, with equal opportunities for citizens and with provisions for citizen participation.

### **The suggested change is:**

LWVSD supports *a city government with structures and procedures that promote responsive, responsible and efficient government with adequate checks and balances of power, with equal opportunities for citizens and with provisions for citizen participation.*

Please plan to attend a unit meeting and join in on the discussions and consensus.

---Mary Jean Word, Update Committee Chair

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June 2008 - July 2009  
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**Letter from Co-President Anne Hoiberg**

As the League begins its 90<sup>th</sup> year, we can be proud of our 89 years of fostering good governance and promoting the civil and human rights of all peoples. While our accomplishments are noteworthy, it seems as though progress in achieving equal human and civil rights for U.S. women is pitted with starts, stalls, and stops, followed by more starts and stalls.

**League's policy of equal rights and equal opportunity:**

The League's work in promoting pay equity stems from concern over the feminization of poverty. The struggle for equal pay was illustrated in early photographs as women in 1911 marched through the Washington, D.C. streets demanding equal pay for equal work. Almost one hundred years later, January 2009, the U.S. Congress adopted the Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act, righting a wrong experienced by thousands and thousands of women—being paid less than their male counterparts. Passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act in the U.S. House of Representatives occurred this January while the U.S. Senate dithered about this legislation at the expense of women's pocketbooks.

**League's Promotion of Representative Government:**

Our current U.S. Congress reflects an under-representation of women, younger people, and minorities, which is attributable in part to incumbency. Once elected, many representatives can count on living out their "golden years" serving in the U.S. Congress; for example, remaining in Congress for men in their seventies, eighties, or nineties seems to be the norm. The slow progress of women's election to Congress is shown by the November 2008 election results, which brought four more women to the U.S. House of Representatives of 435 members and one more to the 100-member U.S. Senate, both now at 17% women to 83% men.

**League's Policy on Reproductive Choices:**

Since the early 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the League worked to protect a woman's right to privacy; to overturn the "gag rule" that prohibited abortion information, services, or referrals by family planning programs funded under Title X; to support the International Family Planning Act; to oppose the military's policy of not funding a service woman's abortion; and to oppose legislation banning late-term abortions. In January and February 2009, the "gag" rule was lifted by President Obama's executive order and funding to the United Nations Population Fund was reinstated.

League's work on these social issues continues, an incredibly slow process of persistence and dedication to our human and civil rights; in my next commentary, League's work and the campaigns to end violence against women and children will be highlighted.

---Anne Hoiberg, Co-President

**“The Politics of Science”**

We are proud to announce that LWVSD is an official Collaborator of the inaugural San Diego Science Festival, planned as the largest celebration of science on the west coast.

The League will be participating in the Science Festival by hosting a program called “The Politics of Science” on March 28, 2009 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the College-Rolando Library at 6600 Montezuma Road, San Diego 92115.

The LWVSD will moderate a panel consisting of Joseph Panetta, the CEO of Biocom; Scott LaFee, Science writer for the U-T; Council Member Sherri Lightner, (tentatively scheduled) Rep. Rush Holt (D. NJ) and PhD in Physics; Susan Hackwood, Executive Director of CA Council on Science and Technology.

We will be investigating the perception of science in the US today, the effect of government policies on the pursuit of science, and the ways government undermines the purity of scientific exploration and research.

American students rank in science far below their counterparts in other developed countries. Is that due to the quantity or quality of their science education or is it that the value of science is underestimated in today’s American culture? The panelists will be sharing their insights as to what we can do to bring the image of science away from the nerdy or bizarre to the modern, interesting and relevant posi-

tion that it needs to be in to draw more young people into the pursuit of science.

Mark your calendars for our event and you can learn about all the other events of in the Festival by visiting the official San Diego Science Festival website: [www.sdsciencefestival.org](http://www.sdsciencefestival.org).

About the Festival: Discover how science affects *your* life through this year’s theme, “The Science of You!” The Science Festival invites you to take part in FREE activities throughout the month of March. For example, enjoy an informal brown bag lunch with a Nobel Laureate, join art detective and scientist, Maurizio Seracini, as he unlocks secrets hidden beneath the world’s greatest artwork.

On Expo Day, April 4 from 10:30 am to 6:00 pm in Balboa Park, expo-goers will enjoy a full day of hands-on activities for every type of science-enthusiast. It will bring together students, families, businesses, scientists, and communities for a festival that is interactive and fun, highlighting the impact of science and innovation on our lives.

I hope we’ll see you at our panel on March 28 and at many of the other events. Bring your friends, children and/or grandchildren to at least one of these exciting events. Let’s make this the first Annual San Diego Science Festival.

Jeanne Brown, VP Administration LWVSD  
Official Collaborator of the SD Science Festival

**Membership Reports**

**Currently the LWVSD has 500 members!**  
**Please welcome these new members.**

NAME	ZIP
Gene Hartwell	92109
Evie Kosower	92105

In the last year, there were thirty-six new members. If you are a member of the League for fifty years, please call the League office.

The Martin Luther King parade was a success. We had two cars participating this year.

Please visit the San Diego Museum of Art exhibit during Black History Month. The exhibit features Black Womanhood, April 16, 2009. It is an excellent presentation.

An Introduction to League will be held on Saturday, March 14, at 2:00 pm at Beryl Flom’s home. 1577 Vista Claridad, La Jolla 92037. You are welcome to come and meet some Board Members and hear about how the League works, what issues we are involved with, and what activities are planned.

---Peggy Finch, VP. Membership Co-Chair  
---Peg Bates, VP. Membership Co-Chair

**Media- (Continued from page 1)****Problem 2:****The Media is failing to serve local community interests.**

In the last 15 years, we have lost more than half of all our investigative reporters. With fewer investigative reporters, less information gets to the public. Corporations pool news information so that a public interest story from one city is shared throughout the country. "The more disconnected the ownership of the media is from a community, the less it is devoted to serving it."

**Problem 3:  
Public Broadcasting**

Public Broadcasting has been the target of repeated assaults on its budget, including a 56 % cut in the 2009-10 budget. Yet it consistently ranks at the top of being the most trusted among institutions that include Congress, the courts, the federal government, commercial broadcast channels, newspapers and cable television

**Problem 4:****New Media's capacity to improve democracy is now under attack.**

The internet looks to be a place that can remedy a

lot of the difficulties that have been plaguing our access to information. Its promise is huge. But there are two things that can limit this promise. One, we need to have internet access for everyone. The other problem is that corporate interests are trying to take over this medium too. To protect us from the corporations making the choices of what parts of the internet we have access to, we need to work for Net Neutrality.

All in all, there is a lot for us to learn. Our two speakers for our March Luncheon will be here to help us.

Jon Bartholomew is the Associate Director for Common Cause and the source of much of the information for this article. He writes extensively on the subject.

J.W. August is the Managing Director of Channel 10 news and won the Sunshine Award for open government from the National Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, as well as national awards for consumer and investigative reporting. The 10News I-Team has won many SPJ awards for investigative and enterprise reporting.

I hope to see you all there.

---Jeanne Brown, VP-Administration

**April Units****Time to do Your Homework!**

The April Units will be devoted to consensus on the National Popular Vote (NPV) for the National League. Background information will be handed out at the March Unit meetings. The task force for LWWUS has the same information on their website, [www.lww.org](http://www.lww.org) in case you miss the March Unit meeting. First, you need to login as a member. The password is your email address. The pin is your member number. If you don't know it or you have never logged into the LWWUS website, register as a first-time user and they will send you your member number (be sure to remember it for the future). Then click on the member section of the website and you will see the information on the NPV study. Please start early to learn about this topic, so we can do consensus at the April Units; we will assume you are familiar with the issues and the proposal. If you are unable to get a copy at the Unit meeting or on the web, please call the League office at 858-483-8696 and we will mail it to you.

---Beryl Flom, Program Chair

**The Future of the Voter**

LWWUS has just announced it will no longer publish the National Voter either in print or on-line. Our League is facing the same financial constraints, but we are considering posting our Voter on-line, so you would be kept informed of our many fascinating activities. This is still in the discussion stage, so no firm decision has been reached. In that case, members without computer access may still receive a mailed copy, if requested. Stay tuned for further details.

## March Unit Meetings: City Government Position Update Consensus!

Monday, Mar. 9 9:30 - 11:30 AM	Rancho Bernardo and Scripps Ranch	San Diego National Bank Community Rm. 2nd Fl. 16789 Bernardo Ctr. Drive San Diego, CA 92128	Bev Wilson (858) 592-9664 Irene Dunny (858) 613-0335
Monday, Mar. 9 5:30 - 7:30 PM	Mission Valley	Mission Valley Library 2123 Fenton Parkway San Diego, CA 92108 (near IKEA & Costco)	Debra Blum (619) 225-0353 Karen Beeson (619) 475-8236
Tuesday, Mar. 10 9:30 - 11:30 AM	La Jolla	La Jolla Library 7555 Draper Avenue La Jolla, CA 92037	Sherry Bloom 858-459-7598 619-200-0300 (cell)
Tuesday, Mar. 10 1:00 - 3:00 PM	University City	North University City Community Library 8820 Judicial Drive San Diego, CA 92122	Catherine Stoll (858) 755-4119 Margaret Stevenson (619) 299-0036
Wednesday, Mar. 11 9:30 - 11:30 AM	North Shores/ Point Loma	LWV Office 4901 Morena Blvd. Ste. 104 San Diego, CA 92117	Shirley Walkoe (619) 223-6314 Nancy Witt (858) 222-7230
Wednesday, Mar. 11 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Tierrasanta	Monterey Villa Clubhouse 5275 Rimpark Dr./Apple Tree Lane San Diego, CA 92124	Carole Porter (858) 279-5474
Thursday, Mar. 12 9:30 - 11:30 AM	East San Diego	College Rolando Library 6600 Montezuma Road San Diego, CA 92115-2828	Barbara Evje (619) 462-4772
Saturday, Mar. 14 10:00 - 12:00 PM	Southeast Unit	Malcolm X Library 5138 Market Street San Diego, CA 92105	Vergie Wright (619) 264-6735 Gwen Pamplin (619) 263-1778
Monday, Mar. 16 2:00 - 4:00 PM	Coronado Unit <b>New Unit!</b>	Coronado Public Library 640 Orange Avenue (Community Room) Coronado, CA 92118	Nancy Cuddy (619) 437-4597

## LWVSD Calendar — March

March			
3/3	Tues.	6:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
3/5	Thurs.	9:30 am	Unit Council, LWVSD Office
3/5	Thurs.	10:15 am	Training of Unit Discussion Leaders, LWVSD Office
3/6	Fri.	10:30 am	County League Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
Mar. 9-16			<b>UNITS - Update and Consensus on City Government Positions</b>
3/16	Mon.	10:00 am	Membership Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
3/18	Wed.	11:00 am	Education Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
3/19	Thurs.	11:30 am	<b>Lunch with League: "Are the Media Serving Our Democracy...or Themselves" at Tom Ham's</b>
3/27	Fri.	9:30 am	Public Policy Meeting, LWVSD Office
3/27	Fri.	Noon	Program Committee, LWVSD Office
3/28	Sat.	6:00 pm	<b>"The Politics of Science" part of SD Science Festival (see page 3)</b>

## International Women's Day and Women History Month Celebrations:

**Saturday, March 7** – UNA-SD, UNA's Women's Equity Council, and TJSL present *No Way to Treat a Treaty*, a workshop to learn about treaties not ratified (e.g., Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)) by the U.S., 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, Thomas Jefferson School of Law, 2121 San Diego Avenue, Rm. 101, Old Town. Free; RSVP: 619.233.3970 or [una@unasd.org](mailto:una@unasd.org)

**Sunday, March 8** – Women from Iraq, Somalia, U.S.A., Iran, Philippines, and Venezuela discuss their *Roles, Realities, and Hopes*, sponsored by UNA's Women's Equity Council, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Women's History Museum, 2323 Broadway, #107, Golden Hill. Free; RSVP: 805.403.4773 or [bettina.hausmann@gmail.com](mailto:bettina.hausmann@gmail.com)

**Sunday, March 8** – American Association of University Women, Cabrillo-Diego Branch, presents *Women in America*, a documentary of the Women's Movement, followed by an interactive discussion, 2:00 pm, Women's History Museum, 2323 Broadway, #107, Golden Hill. Free! RSVP: 619.223.8074 or [ahoiberg@aol.com](mailto:ahoiberg@aol.com)

**Saturday, March 14** – San Diego County Commission on the Status of Women presents the *2009 Forum on the Status of Women and Girls in San Diego County*, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, University of San Diego, 7:30 am – noon. [elovettecolyer@sandiego.edu](mailto:elovettecolyer@sandiego.edu)

**Wednesday, March 18** – The Fifth Annual International Women's Day Breakfast celebrates *Powerful Voices in Peacebuilding*, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, University of San Diego. 7:30 am. Questions: 619.260.7509 or <http://peace.sandiego.edu>

**Saturday, March 21** – Dr. Gail Dimitroff discusses memoir writing and her memoir, *Mande!*, Women's History Museum, 2323 Broadway, #107, Golden Hill, 3:00 pm. Free. 619.223.8074 or [ahoiberg@aol.com](mailto:ahoiberg@aol.com)

**Saturday, March 28** – Mark your calendar for the annual San Diego County Women's Hall of Fame, honoring six San Diego women! Questions: 619.233.7963 or [info@whmec.org](mailto:info@whmec.org)

### March 6, 5 -7 PM 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual COMMON CAUSE Fundraiser

655 West Broadway, Suite 1900  
San Diego, CA 92101

Cost: \$50 per person  
\$40 for Common Cause members bringing a guest

We have three wonderful speakers who will be sharing their views on how we can bring about effective change to improve the way our democracy works. All of this in a beautiful setting on the 19 floor, with good food, good conversations and good people.

**Lori Saldaña**- Speaker Pro Tempore of California Assembly-speaking on Campaign Finance Reform

**Glenn Smith**- Professor of Political Science UDSD-speaking on Initiative Reform

**Mike Thaller** -Campaign for Progressive Radio -speaking on Media Reform

Food and beverages will be served. Please join us and bring a friend.

You can register on line at this link <http://www.commoncause.org/CA/SDFundraiser>

*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.*

**League of Women Voters of San Diego  
Proposed VS Actual Budget  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2008**

The following is a brief version of the year end financial statements. A complete version is on file with the League office.

INCOME			EXPENSES		
	PROPOSED	ACTUAL		PROPOSED	ACTUAL
ADMINISTRATION	3,278.00	7,823.05	ADMINISTRATION	34,225.00	39,919.57
ADVOCACY:SD,CA,US			ADVOCACY:SD,CA,US	100.00	
STUDY/CITIZENS INFO	2,000.00	26,415.00	STUDY/CITIZENS INFO	2,800.00	17,137.99
DEVELOPMENT	39,000.00	12,656.80	DEVELOPMENT	13,800.00	2,506.71
MEMBERSHIP	27,539.13	28,562.20	MEMBERSHIP	18,810.75	18,328.86
NEWSLETTER-VOTER	518.62	120.00	NEWSLETTER-VOTER	3,000.00	2,649.12
VOTER SERVICE	650.00	2,003.75	VOTER SERVICE	250.00	671.97
<b>GRAND TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$72,985.75</b>	<b>\$77,580.80</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$72,985.75</b>	<b>\$81,214.22</b>

The balance of \$3,633.42 was transferred from savings.

<b>Total Interest Income from Investments</b>	<b>\$ 3,795.63</b>
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**Education Fund Income and Expenses**

Beginning Education Fund Balance: 7/1/07	\$1,982.33
Education Fund Income	4,365.00
Education Fund Expenditures	
LWVCA PMP	(768.00)
LWVUS PMP	(4,624.50)
Pro's & Cons	(484.88)
Smart Voter Bookmarks	(80.00)
<b>Education Fund Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$389.95</b>

**Bank Accounts Balances at 6/30/2008**

Checking account	\$ 3,085.29
Investments	93,563.11
Ed. Fund	389.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$97,038.35</b>

## Inauguration Week in our America

Arriving in Washington on the January 16 began a whirlwind week of emotions at tears level, hope exuding from the faces of thousands, and smiles shared in the endless crowds. And, an air of excitement was everywhere, whether standing in line for Inauguration tickets; standing on the Mall crying as Pete Seeger, his grandson, and Bruce Springsteen sang "This Land is Your Land"; standing in the Metro until youth smilingly offered their seats; standing in line to enter the ticketed area on Inauguration Day; or standing throughout the ceremony. In the COLD!

The highlights of my week included attending a luncheon, with 2,500 other like-minded people, all celebrating the election of women to the U.S. Congress, gubernatorial positions, and the appointment of women to President Obama's Cabinet. We heard from ten of these articulate, intelligent women, including Janet Napolitano, Nancy Pelosi, and Hillary Rodham Clinton. I also attended two receptions: one to chat with Secretary of

State Hillary Clinton, her husband, and several other notables (e.g., Lynn Schenk, Francine Busby, Kathleen Brown) and the others to enjoy the spirit of camaraderie at the office of Susan Davis.

President Barack Obama's Inaugural Speech inspired all of us to remember that we Americans can accomplish anything when we embrace a "common purpose," that we will succeed when we extend opportunity to all in achieving our "common good," and that we will play a role in ushering in peace when we realize our "common humanity." Equally important, he reminded world leaders that we Americans "will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

Throughout the week, the tears couldn't be stopped, especially when our President urged us to "pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America." Yes, the work has begun.

Anne Hoiberg, Co-President



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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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### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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