



League of Women Voters of San Diego County

COUNTY VOTER

Winter 2007

An Inter-League Organization (ILO) - City of San Diego • East San Diego County • North Coast • Escondido

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The information contained herein is for the use of League members only and cannot be republished or used for any other purpose without the written consent of the League of Women Voters.

President's Letter

The New Year bells have rung in the "Year of the Elections." Implementing Voter Services plans will be a 2008 High Priority for the County League.

The updating of the Smart Voter website is in process by Smart Voter Director Joyce Joseph and the County Smart Voter team. Presidential candidates, state ballot measures and local ballot measures within San Diego County will be listed. The team is also exploring outreach to local high schools, colleges and public service announcements.

County League Treasurer Ellen Gifford and I have alternately attended four community organization meetings with Deborah Seiler, Registrar of Voters. She is putting into operation election changes established by Debra Bowen, California Secretary of State. A new format for poll worker training is being activated to hopefully remove errors made in recent elections. The Election Office is recruiting high school seniors, college students, and registered citizens as workers. In order to volunteer, contact the San Diego County Registrar of Voters Office at 858-565-5800.

LWVC has joined Common Cause and AARP to support a new redistricting initiative titled "California Voters First Act", which they hope to qualify for the November ballot. See the VOTER article written by Jeanne Brown, V.P. LWVSD, to acquaint us with the new initiative. Signature-gathering will be an exciting experience in making democracy work.

County League is planning to partner with San Diego MamaVOTE to provide local information of interest to voters in our county. The focus will be educational material for young mothers.

A website is being developed for the County League. Gail Tullao of the North Coast League is assisting and will be our Webmaster. Hopefully, it will be online by the end of January.

Local Leagues will start to include the County League in their program planning meetings for the County League June 7, 2008 Convention. Are there some new regional studies needed? What issues need emphasis and advocacy? We WELCOME your recommendations.

Nancy McCleary
County League President

A Memorial to Grace Lennon Roos

One Leaguer said of Grace "Her name suited her perfectly" and another said "I miss her serenity. She was a woman who was secure in herself. In her lifetime she ably served League for 45 years." The ILO honored her in 2004 with these words:

Grace first joined the League in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, in 1962. In short order she became Unit Chair, Voter Service Director, Treasurer of her local League as well as Treasurer of the State League. Educated at Marymount College, she was good in math and made it her major. After graduation she worked for four years at Met Life before marrying her husband George and moving to Connecticut. There, four sons were born and she soon added Cub Scout den mother to her many titles.

For the San Diego League, Grace put all her talents to work quickly and quietly. She chaired the Transportation Study, became an Administrative Vice President and a Unit Coordinator and ran all kinds of special projects like the UCSD student elections and voter registration booths at the various Price Clubs.

Grace was ILO Transportation Director and a SANDAG observer for more than a decade. She also observed all the Regional Government committee meetings and co-chaired Arrangements for the 1997 State Convention and the following year did the same job for the 1998 National Convention, both held in San Diego. Today we honor her as a tireless contributor to both her home League and the ILO Board.

Two of Grace and George's sons live in San Diego, one in Tucson and one in Germany. She was a grandmother to six grandchildren. She was also instrumental in volunteering her efforts at The Scripps Library where she was held in such high esteem for the many hours she donated, that they named a children's book corner in her honor.

A Memorial Mass was held at St Gregory the Great's Catholic Church on September 14th in Scripps Ranch, where she was fondly remembered by her family and her many League and community friends.

County League Awards 2007 College Scholarships

Nancy McCleary and Jan Hartwig had the pleasure of attending the Juvenile Court and Community Schools annual Dollars for Scholars Banquet Friday, September 28th to award The San Diego County League's two \$1000 scholarships for 2007. Teachers and counselors from the Juvenile Court and Community schools pick the recipients in consultation with our guidelines. Two very impressive young women, Sophia Thayer and Marlene Ibarra, were chosen. The money will make a real difference in helping them obtain a college education.

Sophia Thayer is a graduate and class valedictorian from the San Pasqual Academy. She is a native of Russia coming to the United States as a child. She was put into foster care around age 15 and bounced among several high schools until graduating from San Pasqual. She attended Grossmont College and is now at UCSD where she has a 3.4 GPA. She finds the wealth and possessions of some of the students there overwhelming but is proud she is doing as well even though she works part time as a file clerk for a law firm. Sophia, a Political Science major planning to attend law school, says the most important thing for foster children is inspiration and support. So many of the girls don't see options other than pregnancy, boyfriends and low-paying jobs.

Marlene Ibarra dropped out of the regular high school programs and was schooled by home teachers and continuation school and says she was very troubled and rebellious. Her older brother was killed in a shooting. She lives with her mother and younger brother, sharing a room with him, which makes studying harder. Her mother did not attend the ceremony. She's had several role models, teachers and mentors who have helped her complete and pursue her education. She is in her second year at Southwestern and says it's very hard working and going to school. She works part time at city schools helping younger children. She would like to transfer to Berkeley and eventually go to law school.

Marlene and Sophia are very grateful for the support and recognition. Attendees at the dinner warmly and respectfully recognized the generous contribution and the County League of Women Voters.

Jan Hartwig, Education

A Basket Full of Treats From Around the County!

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County is sponsoring a raffle in January, 2008, that will include opportunities to try some of the many wonderful attractions and small businesses throughout the County. Several board members and the local Leagues have provided the prizes. The drawing of winners will be held during the February 2008 board meeting. Proceeds from the raffle will assist in supporting many activities that benefit the entire region.

Look for the mailing early in the new year and enter for a chance to win one of the following prizes:

- ◆ California Center for the Arts - \$100 gift certificate
- ◆ Home Depot - \$100 gift certificate
- ◆ Old Globe Theatre - \$50 gift certificates
- ◆ Cohn restaurants (Dakota Grill, Island Prime, Prado, etc.) - \$50 gift certificate
- ◆ La Jolla Playhouse - \$108 gift certificates
- ◆ Italian leather purse by Heather Arndt for FEAL - \$125 value
- ◆ Weekenders USA clothing - \$100 gift certificate
- ◆ Portrait session and prints with Julie Edwards - \$300 value
- ◆ San Diego Solution personal training sessions and gift basket - \$160 value

Susan Peterson
Strategic and Financial Planning Vice President

Cash Incentives available for Solar Water Heating

The California Solar Water Heating Pilot Program (SWHPP) is now accepting applications from residents, businesses, and contractors interested in reducing their energy costs by installing a state-of-the-art Solar Water Heating System to assist their current water heater.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) recently awarded the California Center for Sustainable Energy (CCSE) \$1.5 million to provide incentives to licensed contractors and homeowners to help reduce the costs and promote the installation of clean, renewable solar water heating systems. Solar water heaters convert the sun's energy to heat, which helps reduce consumers' dependence on the fossil fuels that power traditional water heating systems. In California, water heaters account for about 30 percent of a home's energy bill.

"In California, about forty to sixty percent of the fossil fuel used to heat water could be saved through the use of clean, renewable solar water heating systems," said SWHPP Manager Annie Henderson. "Solar water heating helps reduce gas and electric consumption, avoids combustion-related emissions, and reduces the need for new fossil fuel infrastructures (power plants)," she added.

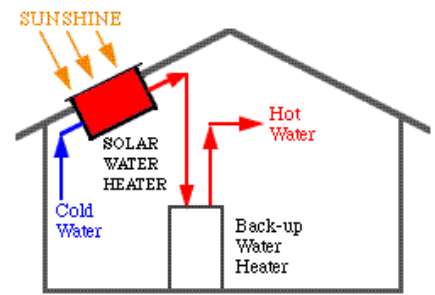
The life cycle cost of using a Solar Water Heating system is lower than using natural gas or electricity at current prices, and in many cases the performance and quality warranties of Solar Water Heating systems exceed the guarantees of other household appliances. Federal tax credits are also available.

And sunlight is a clean, renewable resource. Solar Water Heating Systems make businesses and consumers more energy independent by helping insulate them from future natural gas and electricity shortages and/or price increases.

CCSE offers free workshops to help consumers, business owners and contractors interested in participating in the program understand the advantages of going solar. Please check CCSE's online Events and Workshops Calendar for event times. Workshops are free and ongoing, so if you miss one, check the next month's calendar to identify a workshop that accommodates your schedule.

To participate in the program, come to the next "Solar Water Heating Basics for Homeowners" workshop, held from 6 pm to 8 pm once a month. You will learn about the different types of solar water heating systems, design specifics, and program requirements. Next, take a look at the list of Eligible Contractors, available on the website below. These contractors have been pre-qualified by the Program and are eligible to receive the cash incentive. The contractor will do the paperwork for you and will receive the

incentive as their final payment, lowering the amount of money you have to pay out-of-pocket! So start now to do your part in mitigating the effects of Global Warming and begin saving money on your utility bill!



A Simple Solar Water Heating System

For more information about the Solar Water Heating Pilot Program, please visit www.swh.energycenter.org.

Redistricting: Finally one that really works!

On November 17th, 2007, the LWVC board endorsed the California Voters First Initiative. After waiting years for the lawmakers to come up with a redistricting bill that did not entail these same lawmakers drawing their own districts, Common Cause of California chose to create one that was open, nonpartisan and fair. The League had been working with them on it, along with AARP and so they were the first two groups to endorse it. Soon, the L.A. Chamber of Commerce followed and then Governor Schwarzenegger. Every day more fair-minded organizations are joining in. This bipartisan support is due to the design of the bill and to the need seen by many that the business that we send our elected officials to accomplish is not getting done, due in large part to the present system.

Under current law, California Legislators draw their own political districts and that is a serious conflict of interest. Not surprising, but 99% of incumbents

were re-elected in those districts they had drawn for themselves in the last election and 100% in the previous one. This hurts the voters for a number of reasons. The one most often mentioned is that cities such as Long Beach, San Jose, and Fresno are often split into multiple oddly-shaped districts to protect the incumbents. Communities such as Koreatown in Los Angeles and La Jolla in San Diego have no political voice because they are divided up into as many as four districts. It's no wonder that people have a hard time remembering which district they are in because they make no sense to anyone, except the incumbents.

This reform will make the redistricting process open and transparent; it will give us five Democrats, five Republicans and four independents on the Commission. The fact that true independents can participate (a voice completely shut out of the current process) is a first. It guarantees that redistricting will be debated in open public meetings and that all minutes will be posted on the internet. The criteria require that districts comply with the US Constitution, the Voting Rights Act; that they be compact and contiguous, and that communities be respected.

What needs to be done is to gather 1,000,000 signatures to put this measure on the ballot. It will be a huge job. The LWVs will be an integral part of this project with its numerous leagues located in all corners of the state. We can provide educated volunteers who are respected by their communities, and we have speakers who are trained to go out into those communities to explain the initiatives. AARP will also be invaluable in pushing the initiative forward.

We will be looking for volunteers to help with this process. Please talk to your friends and neighbors about how important it will be to qualify the initiative and to get it passed. I will be looking for volunteers in all of the leagues throughout the county to help organize the signature drive. Petitions will be circulated right after Christmas and we will continue collecting signatures until April 17. Let's show our State that San Diego County wants a change now in how our districts are chosen. We want the voters back in charge. We want voters to

choose legislators, not legislators to choose their voters.

If you have any questions or want to help with the signature drive, contact me, Jeanne Brown at jhisten@cox.net or jbrown@commoncause.org

Exodus Recovery, Inc.

The San Diego County Mental Health Department has announced that Exodus Recovery, Inc. of Culver City, .was determined to provide the most advantageous proposal to the County, cost and other factors included, and is recommended for contract award of the North County Mental Health Assessment Center.

TID-BITS

Recently published books highlight the contributions of League members around the country. Check your local library or bookstore for them.

Soul of a Citizen by Paul Rogat Loeb
Getting a Grip by Frances Moore Lappe
The Next Form of Democracy by Matt Leighninger



This Newsletter is published four times a year and contains articles sent by members or articles collected by the editors that reflect the positions and interests of the San Diego Leagues on a regional or statewide basis. Please feel free to send articles that you think will be of general interest to the members to liznandy@roadrunner.com.

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