



# League of Women Voters of San Diego County

## COUNTY VOTER

Winter 2006

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

Congratulations to all our Local Leagues on their November 7 election outreach to the new and potential young voters! In reviewing election Voter Services activities, I realized that many community colleges and high schools were involved in pros and cons, voter registration, and candidate forums. Students not only listened to League speakers but participated in election projects on their campus. Many of the outreach events opened doors to recording by cable TV that increased community connection with the Leagues.

The County League has made a post-election outreach. Senator Christine Kehoe invited the County LWV to participate in public comments at the November 17 Senate Local Government Committee Hearing on the Regional Airport Authority. Since the hearing was related to state legislation, we obtained approval of LWVC for our testimony. The comments I made at the hearing urged the Airport Authority to increase public opportunities to access meetings, agendas and reports; provide all nine board members the same per meeting remuneration; and connect with SANDAG to avoid disruption of land use compatibility planning.

Senator Kehoe introduced SB 10, Regional Airport Authority Reform Act of 2007 on December 4. It designates SANDAG to take back responsibility for land use compatibility around the county's 16 civil airports. The County League will follow SB 10 and obtain approval from LWVC for any action.

The New Year will provide us with new opportunities for all of us to work together in our grassroots mode.

Sincerely – Nancy McCleary, President

### LWVC MAKES PLANS FOR LOCAL HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION ELECTION EDUCATION

The League of Women Voters of California is planning to provide in-depth training sessions on supervising elections for Homeowners' Associations in the coming year. The North Coast League, which recently conducted one such election, has volunteered to coordinate training for the county, once LWVC has sent out materials. A committee, with a member from each of our Leagues has been formed in order to plan and supervise our preparatory activities. LWVC intends to hold regional training meetings, provide sample documents on its web site, conduct ongoing training via the web, and develop a certifications process for Leagues and individuals.

There are about 41,000 HOAs in the state and as many as 1500 new ones are created each year. SB 61, which went into effect this past summer, mandates certain more comprehensive and stringent election procedures, and since the League is known for its competence in such matters, our active involvement will provide both visibility and income.

Peg Dornish, Co-Vice President for North Coast



### AN EARLY VALENTINE

In the spirit of early planning for a special valentine treat for you or for someone special, the League of Women Voters of San Diego County is sponsoring a raffle in January, 2007. Several board members have provided one or more prizes donated by establishments in their respective areas. The drawing of winners will be held during the February 2007 board meeting. Proceeds from the raffle will assist in supporting many activities that encompass 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
- Old Globe Theatre: \$50 gift certificate
- Kohn Restaurant Group \$50 gift certificate
- Home Depot: \$25 gift certificate
- Grossmont Nutrition Center: \$25 gift certificate
- Sycuan Resort: 2 rounds of golf for 2 plus cart fees (\$114 value)
- Portrait Session: \$200 value

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## SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OBSERVER REPORT

The Board of Supervisors of San Diego County has held many public meetings with very little public attendance in the years since reorganization and privatization has made them more efficient. Technology has allowed public access to meetings via the County Television Network (CTN) either live or replayed for later viewing.

Millions of dollars are appropriated for federal and state mandated programs, or spent locally on ideas for projects from Supervisors. Most are approved on consent without discussion.

TV and newspaper coverage is comprehensive for the City of San Diego, but not for County government. Mayors are well known in their cities, but the County tradition of changing the Chairperson of the Board every year does not carry the same aura of leadership. County government makes decisions about social services, libraries, elections, and public safety for all of us whether we live in the largest cities or the furthest rural corner.

The ideal response to this situation is that each of you, members of local Leagues, as smart voters, are also smart citizens who take advantage of County websites and CTN to be informed about the decisions that affect our action or positions. It's not difficult, even a hard core technophobe can do it.

**CABLE TV/LIVE STREAMING:** The meetings of the Board of Supervisors are televised live, starting at 9 am on Tuesday and 9 am on Wednesday. They are also replayed on cable television at 9 pm the evening of the meeting. On Saturday, Tuesday meetings replay at 1 pm and Wednesday meetings replay at 9 pm. Tune in to the following channels: Cox 24 (South) or 19 (North), Time Warner 22 and Time Warner 66 if you were an Adelphia

customer. Live streaming of the proceedings is available on the internet at [www.ctn.org](http://www.ctn.org).

**ACCESS TO COUNTY RECORDS:** Many County records can be accessed through the Internet. The Clerk of the Board office maintains legislative documents accessible through the Internet, including Board Agendas, Minutes, County Charter, Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Administrative Code, and Board Policies. Also available on line is information on Boards, Commissions and Committees, a history of the County Administration Center, and information on volunteer opportunities.

Clerk of the Board home page: [www.sandiegocob.com](http://www.sandiegocob.com)  
County home page: [www.sdcounty.ca.gov](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov)  
Clerk of the Board phone: (619) 531-5600  
Board of Supervisors phone: (619) 531-5700

Eddie Cisco, Observer

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## FROM ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

### LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR GLOBAL WARMING POLLUTION

If you are like most folks, you're probably thinking, "Yep, global warming is a monster threat. But it's so huge it's impossible to solve." Global warming is a monumental challenge, but global warming is still a problem we can solve if we all work together.

Global warming facts.

**21** Percent of America's global warming pollution produced by individual households

**42** Number of states where electricity customers have the option to buy green power through their utility or an alternative power supplier

**200,000** Number of American households that use solar energy

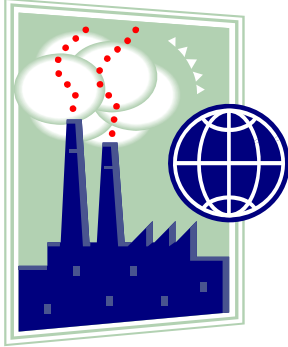
**25** Pounds of global warming pollution emitted per gallon of gas used in cars

**10** Percent that Americans could reduce their global warming pollution if all car buyers chose a model that gets 5 more miles per gallon than their current vehicle

**350** Pounds of global warming pollution reduced by lowering the thermostat 2 degrees in winter

**38** Number of watts needed to replace a standard 150 watt light bulb with a compact florescent bulb

**25** Percent reduction in home heating bills by insulating attics, pipes, ductwork and flooring



For more information go to  
[www.fightglobalwarming.com](http://www.fightglobalwarming.com).

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## SMART VOTER IS TEN YEARS OLD AND GROWING

Smart Voter is a project of the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the website.

The League's Smart Voter project ([www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)) again provided fast, easy computer access to a wide range of voting information for the November election. Statewide, the website had over 7 million pages viewed, a double increase over 2004! In San Diego County, 158,000 voters studied candidates for local offices and local ballot measures, with Proposition A (the airport advisory measure) receiving the most computer traffic. The one contested Superior Court judicial contest and higher court contests all received particularly heavy traffic. All justices on the California Supreme Court and districts in the Court of Appeal up for retention and the two judicial candidates in San Diego County posted material on Smart Voter. Over 25,000 county voters turned to the website to verify their polling places.

The growing popularity of Smart Voter here is due to League members throughout the county working actively to: encourage candidates to post their campaign messages (free to them), provide news links to contests and ballot measure presentations, and most importantly,

educate more of their own members on the ease and usefulness of the site.

Many members in our four local leagues contributed greatly to the project's success this fall, with coordination from Lisa Hamann, Eddie Cisco and Marietta Lassaline (East County); Muriel Filman and Judy Seerey (San Diego City); Patrick Coony and June Rady (Escondido); Joyce Joseph (North Coast); and Nancy McCleary County League President. With help from all members, the project will continue to grow in popularity and value in helping voters make their own informed choices.

Joyce Joseph, Smart Voter Director

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## BIRDS THREATENED BY UNFRIENDLY WALLS AND DISAPPEARING WETLANDS

All along the U.S.-Mexico border, a man-made structure is obliterating or silencing nature and wildlife. This wall that is being erected by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Secure Border Initiative (SBI) is a collection of barriers, concrete rivers and electronic surveillance that could span the entire borderlands of California, Arizona and portions of Texas. The SBI barrier, at a fiscal cost projected at 3-10 million dollars per mile, certainly ranks as one of the most expensive single infrastructure projects in the history of the Western United States. In October 2006, President Bush signed legislation approving 700 miles of barricades and up to 1800 electronic surveillance towers along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Media sources say that the SBI is too expensive to implement and will not be built. Yet, nowhere is barrier building occurring at such a frenetic pace as around San Diego, California. At present, SBI construction activities threaten the health of the largest coastal wetlands complex in Southern California.

The wetlands of the Tijuana River estuary lie on the extreme southwest corner of the state facing the city of Tijuana in Baja California. For millions of years, this wetlands complex has functioned as a ceaseless airport hub for birds that fly annually, immense and exhausting voyages along the Pacific Coast of the Americas. Each year, at this avian airport, thousands of migrating birds rest and refuel.

What makes this estuary so special and essential for successful bird migration, is that it provides a seemingly unlimited array of plant and animal food located in differing habitats or vegetative communities. On Earth

Day 2005, the United Nations designated The Tijuana River Estuary as a wetlands complex of international significance. That same year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security approved SBI and construction of the wall began directly upstream of the Tijuana River estuary.

At present, the Department of Homeland Security is modifying the hydrology of the Tijuana River by flattening hills, obliterating native vegetation and filling or damming streambeds with millions of cubic feet of dirt and concrete to ensure level walls and freeway style roads for the Border Patrol. Furthermore, federal and state governmental scientists and engineers have documented that the DHS barrier would create flooding that will alter river flows, and contribute to downstream sedimentation and pollution. This priceless Tijuana River estuary could ultimately be destroyed.

Many SBI proponents have told me: “So what if a wetlands is destroyed, the birds can find others”. This is the same argument developers and builders have used as Californians witnessed an over ninety percent loss of coastal wetlands during the past fifty years. At present no comparable wetland exists in Southern California that provides habitat with the same richness and diversity as the Tijuana River Estuary. It is unique. Such stopover rest areas are critical to millions of birds that would not survive their annual migrations without them.

In 2005, DHS secretary Michael Chertoff exercised his congressionally mandated authority to waive all federal laws governing the barriers being built on the U.S.-Mexico border, potentially nullifying a multitude of environmental laws that protect wetland habitat and migratory waterfowl. SBI is also in clear violation of the Treaty between the United States of America and Mexico for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Mammals. The new Congress has the opportunity to prevent this North American environmental catastrophe.

By Suzanne M. Michel, Ph.D., Environmental Geography  
Director of Natural Resources LWVSDC  
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## **MORE DOLLARS ENRICH MHS**

There is good news all around when the SDC Department of Mental Health holds meetings to let us know that there are more dollars to be spent on mental health services than originally anticipated. These dollars come from two different places. The first source is one time only funds (\$7,966,694) that were unspent when programs did not begin as soon as money became available. Providers and contractors were overwhelmed with the pressure of starting 33 new services in San Diego County, while the state struggled with guidelines on how best to spend the money.

The second source of funds, \$9,010,700 is new money. It is the result of there being more millionaires living in California than originally estimated. These dollars will continue to grow if the economy is strong in the years ahead and will be added to the \$25M originally anticipated for the years 2005-07, either in supporting new services or enhancing those that need an extra boost. The state is wisely saving some of the monies for the leaner years when revenues are down.

This money is changing the lives of so many during this holiday season and in the months and years ahead. Hopefully it will serve our unmet needs, rebuild our system of care and most of all, support those with brain disorders or mental illness in a timely and compassionate way.

Liz Kruidenier, VP, Director of Mental Health,  
LWVSDC