



The Voter

League of Women Voters
of San Bernardino
1955-NOW!

Your guide to local issues, action, and information

August 2012

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President's Message

We hope you're enjoying the summer, and that you are looking forward to getting back into the swing of things soon.

Your Board held a brainstorming session at my mountain abode on July 14. We plan to participate in National Registration Day on September 25, and hold a series of meetings for the public on money in politics *Democracy in the Balance - Money, Speech, and Power* (based on a program developed by Connecticut Leagues). We have already been called on to explain the November election's ballot proposition. We expect we will have many more requests as the election draws nearer.

So - be thinking of what you're interested in and how you would like to be involved. We can use speakers who will explain the Propositions (training provided) in September and October, and members who will register voters on September 25. Looking ahead, we will need members who are interested in being on the Initiative and Referendum Position Committee that will be looking at our state position and whether it should be changed. (We last looked at it in 1999.)

We are interested in increasing our visibility, including using social media as a communication tool to connect with our members and the pub-

lic, and we can certainly use you "techies" to help with that.

Another way you can help is to observe the San Bernardino City Unified School District board meetings. Several members could agree to share the observing. The same goes for observing San Bernardino Council meetings - even if it's via TV.

Lots to do, so little time, but you know the old saying - Many hands make light work. Think about it, and let me know what you would like to do.

Gloria Anderson
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909-338-4163

Special points of interest:

- *Through study and discussion the League of Women Voters developed a position on Charter Schools. Now that it has been approved it will provide a foundation for discussion and advocacy.*
- *Medicare will turn 47 years old this month!*
- *San Bernardino is beginning down the path to Chapter 9 bankruptcy. The process is expected to take at least one year. It is quite possible that it will take significantly more time than that.*
- *LWVSB will hold a series of meetings on Money, Speech, and Power. We'll send out dates as soon as the logistics are finalized.*

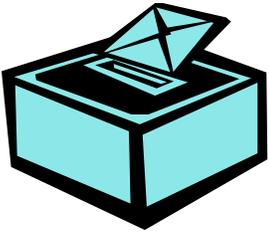
Report from the LWVSB Annual Meeting

Sixteen members of the League of Women Voters of San Bernardino attended LWVSB's Annual Meeting on June 2, 2012 at the Arrowhead County Club. (Thank you Marilyn Patterson for making the arrangements!)

LWVSB is financially sound. The Associated

Students of California State University San Bernardino contracted with our League to run an election February 29-March 1. This happens about once every five years, so it is not an annual source of income, but it was very welcome at this time, not only for the income but also because supporting

the democratic process by running an election is central to our mission. The income allowed us to forego a fundraising appeal to members and supporters last year. It was agreed that LWVSB will watch out for other opportunities to earn funds by administering elections.



LWVSB administered CSUSB's student election. Thank you to everyone who helped!

The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all. John F. Kennedy



LWVSB supports an excellent education for all students.

Report from the LWVSB Annual Meeting (cont.)

There was some discussion on economizing. It was decided that we will not send a board member to the National Convention; instead we will pay the registration fee of a San Francisco League member, with the understanding that she will act as our delegate. The savings on travel and hotel will free up funds for more public meetings. It was agreed that one program we will offer will be *Democracy in the Balance: Money, Speech and Power*.

We reviewed the current LWVSB positions on

- San Bernardino's City Charter
- Libraries
- Equality of Opportunity for Women
- Education
- Healthcare
- Mental Health
- Homelessness
- Urban and Regional Planning
- Transportation
- Water

The vote was to retain all these current positions.

We agreed that we would hear the report from our Charter Schools Study Committee and from our

speaker Chris Tickell, SBCUSD Director of Charter School Operation, prior to discussing and voting on a new position on Charter Schools. The report and the speaker were excellent. There followed a "robust" discussion on the proposed position on Charter Schools. The position is based on what the committee presented to us after visiting most of the schools and gathering information about them. They found that the schools varied in the kind of job they were doing, and members agreed that is important that the school district has strong oversight of the 11 charter schools in San Bernardino that have been approved by the District and for which they receive public funding.

The proposed position was amended and then passed as:

Position in Brief: Because charter schools are currently by law an option to a traditional school education, oversight from the San Bernardino City Unified School District must observe the following:

A. SBCUSD should provide strong administrative, financial, and quality oversight to assure that charter schools observe the requirements of

their charters, applicable state laws, and the Brown Act.

B. SBCUSD should be pro-active in identifying and correcting charter school problems.

C. SBCUSD should be allowed to consider the financial impact that approval of more charter schools would have on the District and existing charter schools.

D. Charter schools owned and operated by corporations outside the District should have local administrative staff available to District staff, parents, and the community.

E. Both the District and charter schools should strive to achieve a close working relationship of trust and cooperation, including sharing of ideas and resources, enhancement of learning experiences for students, and in-service training opportunities for teachers and administrators.

The Nominating Committee advanced a slate of candidates and they were greeted with general acclaim! LWVSB's Bylaws stipulate staggered terms (President, Secretary, and half the Board in odd numbered years; Vice President, Treasurer and half the

Board in even numbered years) to preserve the continuity of the organization.) Terms begin July 1 and run for two years unless otherwise specified.

Our current Board is:

Gloria Anderson - 2011-2013 (President)

Dennis Baxter - 2012-2014 (Vice-President)

Shirley Harlan - 2011-2013 (Secretary)

Valerie Lichtman - 2012-2014 (Treasurer)

Directors

2011-2013:

Jill Vassilakos-Long, Amy Ellison, and Marilyn Patterson

2012-2014:

Mary Saxon-Hobbs, Kathy Ervin, Barbara Sokoloff, and Ruth Petrucci

2012-2013: Susan Nieblas

Congratulations and THANK YOU to our new Board members!

If you would like to get more involved in LWVSB call Gloria Anderson – we could use your talents!



Medicare Turns 47

On July 30, 1965 President Johnson signed the legislation that created Medicare.

In 1945 President Truman asked the legislature to create a national health insurance plan. Congress was unable or unwilling to develop a plan for universal coverage, over two decades of contentious debate, with the American Medical Association repeatedly warning about the dangers of “socialized medicine” no legislation was passed. In 1965, with approximately one half of the elderly population of the United States unable to afford or to get approved for health insurance, Congress moved forward with a more limited plan, a plan to cover citizens aged 65 and older. This is Medicare, and it is under attack today.

At the 2012 National Convention of the League of Women Voters, delegates voted for “Medicare for all.” (<http://www.healthcare-now.org/league-of-women-voters-us-endorses-improved-medicare-for-all>) This mandate for universal health care is congruent with LWVSB’s recently reaffirmed position on Health Care:

A. Support the principle that health care is not a privilege but a right of each individual and requires planning at the federal, state, and local levels.

B. Support of health education directed to all elements of the population and encompassing a full range of preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative practices, services and resources, with emphasis given to educating



people to take responsibility for their own health.

C. Support of cooperative community planning to develop services and facilities that are lacking or need substantial improvement.

D. Support of efforts to Immunization of all children.

Monday, July 30 is Medicare’s 47th anniversary. Many engaged citizens will mark the anniversary by calling their Congressional representatives to

(continued on p. 6)

“Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.”

Hippocrates

City of San Bernardino bankruptcy...

The Economic History:

In the 1980s San Bernardino was booming, then came the closure of Norton Air Force Base and Kaiser Steel, Santa Fe Railroad moved its repair yard from San Bernardino to Kansas City, and the 15 Freeway opened, allowing major traffic to bypass the Inland Center and Central City Mall. Middle-class jobs moved out of the area and the people who had been employed in those jobs either moved with them or retired. Real estate in San Bernardino became a buyers' market, and many homes were sold to investors who turned them into rentals. People who worked in Los Angeles or in Orange County moved to San Bernardino for low-cost housing and commuted to work. The economic health of the city deteriorated.

It's amazing that people are surprised by the economic problems in this city, this is certainly not the first round of budget cuts San Bernardino has faced.

In August of 2010 City Council members Fred Shorett, Virginia Marquez, Tobin Brinker, and Rikke Van Johnson voted for more than \$11 million in cuts to the city

budget. (Jason Desjardina, Chas Kelley, and Wendy McCammack voted against the cuts.)

On August 24, 2010 *San Bernardino County Sun* reporter Andrew Edwards wrote, "[City Manager Charles] McNeely, Mayor Pat Morris and the four council members who voted to enact the new round of budget cuts expressed considerable distaste for the decision, but said during Monday's special budget meeting the city had run out of options to avoid insolvency."¹

On July 24, 2010 Council Member Tobin Brinker had written in *The Sun* about his efforts (with a group of volunteers) to rehabilitate one of the closed parks. He wrote of his sorrow and concern over the city's budget problems, informing readers that over the previous two years the City Council had reduced the city payroll by 173 positions and renegotiated labor contracts to reduce labor costs by 10 percent. Parks had been closed, the libraries had cut programs (including their extremely successful youth programs) and reduced hours. The city had borrowed \$3 million, raised selected fees, and used the city's budget reserves to close

the rest of the budget gap.²

By the end of the 2010 cuts many city employees had been laid off. The maintenance team for the city parks (which once numbered 60 employees) was reduced to 11 workers. Remaining city employees saw cuts in their salaries and benefits.

This was not the first round of San Bernardino budget cuts by any means. Past cuts to the San Bernardino City Libraries had closed the entire Coddington Library branch. (It was the branch library in Perris Hill Park.)

Cuts had closed departments of the remaining libraries, and reduced hours everywhere. Even the history room for San Bernardino (then called the California Room) had been closed in June 1997 when the only librarian working there, Chris Shovey, was laid off.

Ms. Shovey felt so strongly that the people of San Bernardino must have access to their history that she began coming in as a volunteer to provide service for the public, work that she donates to our community to this day. Paul Garrity, who lost his job at the library in 2010 (along



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Democracy is a device that insures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.
George Bernard Shaw



San Bernardino's economic reserves are gone. .

with a third of the city's remaining library staff) has joined her there to provide volunteer service since he was laid off. Where else do you find laid-off employees working for free to maintain city services?

Today:

It was hoped that the 2010 budget cuts would set the city on a sound financial footing, but since that time the economy has deteriorated. Two thirds of all homes in San Bernardino are "under water", unemployment is over 15%, and sales tax dropped by \$16 million last year. The city is bound by contracts that it cannot meet and will soon vote on bankruptcy.

The Law:

In 1937 Congress passed an amendment to the Bankruptcy Act to extend bankruptcy protections to municipalities.

This new law made it almost impossible for creditors to force the liquidation of community assets to repay debts. Since the passage of the amendment there have been over 600 municipal bankruptcies.

Chapter 9 bankruptcy is similar to Chapter 11 (offering restructuring of

debts, the imposition of an automatic stay of some types of litigation, and the cancellation or rejection of some contracts). It differs from Chapter 11 in offering more support for re-writing collective bargaining agreements and protecting community assets from liquidation.

In a Chapter 9 bankruptcy financially distressed cities, counties, townships, and school districts work with their creditors to create a plan to resolve the outstanding debts.

What's next?

California authorizes municipalities to file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. A new California Law stipulates the path to Chapter 9 bankruptcy. The first step is for the city to declare a Fiscal Emergency. The City Council did that on July 18. Next steps will include negotiations with everyone to whom the city owes money. These negotiations will be time-consuming. The process is likely to take more than one year.

Sources:

1. Edwards, Andrew. San Bernardino's New Budget Cuts Include Police, Firefighters. San Bernardino County Sun, August 24, 2010.

2. Brinker, Tobin. San Bernardino Walking a Tightrope. San Bernardino County Sun, July 24, 2010.

San Bernardino City Council Meetings may be viewed via the Inland Empire Media Group: http://iemediagroup.com/council_live.php

Bloomberg Law Report on Chapter 9:

http://www.foxrothschild.com/uploadedFiles/newspublications/Vis-count_Klein_Financial_Chapter_9_Bankruptcy_080510.pdf

DeBord Report: A Q&A on the San Bernardino bankruptcy: <http://www.scpr.org/blogs/economy/2012/07/11/7003/san-bernardino-bankruptcy-q/>

The Inland Empire Economic Partnership archives local economist John Husing's podcasts at http://www.ieep.com/?page_id=1753. Dr. Husing discussed San Bernardino's possible bankruptcy on July 17 and 18, 2012. (Originally broadcast on KVCN FM 91.9)



At July 18th's Cit Council meeting Roxanne Williams asks the Council to save our city.

National Public Radio Morning Edition's story of San Bernardino's City Council bankruptcy vote: <http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=156956167&m=156935596>



City of San Bernardino logo.

**League of Women Voters
of San Bernardino 1955-NOW!**

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**The League of Women Voters: Because
Democracy is not a spectator sport.**

Upcoming events—save the date!

San Bernardino City Unified School District meetings are at 5:30 pm, the first and third Tuesday of each month, in the Board of Education building: 777 N. "F" St. The next meeting is August 7.

The next San Bernardino City Council meeting is on August 6 at 1:30 pm. Watch this site for further information (including agenda and videos of past meetings): <http://sanbernardinocityca.igam2.com/Citizens/?Frame=no>

The minutes and videos of past Redlands City Council Meetings can be found here: <http://www.cityofredlands.org/citycouncil/meeting> The next Redlands City Council Meeting is August 7. Open session begins at 6 pm.

September 25: National Voter Registration Day

November 6: General Election

We're on the web: <http://lwvsanbernardino.ca.lwvnet.org>

**To Find Contact
Information For Your
Representatives:
Federal:
Congressional Directory
[http://congress.org/
congressorg/directory/
congdir.tt](http://congress.org/congressorg/directory/congdir.tt)**

**State:
[http://192.234.213.69/
lmapsearch/framepage.asp](http://192.234.213.69/lmapsearch/framepage.asp)**

**or call your local library
and ask!**

Medicare turns 47 (cont.)

let them know that we support Medicare and would like to see the program expanded.

A few talking points:

The typical senior household has \$66,900 in savings, while studies suggest that the average man needs \$124,000 to cover health care during retirement, while the average woman needs \$152,000.

Based on the last comprehensive study of the Medicare population, which occurred in 2006, the average household

income of Medicare enrollees was \$22,600 compared to a U.S. median income of \$48,201.

In 2008, 16% of Medicare enrollees were living in poverty, compared to 13% of the general population.

Roughly two-thirds of seniors require some form of long-term care over their lifetimes, and 18% are enrolled in a nursing home for at least a year.

For more information on Medicare demographics:

[http://
www.medpac.gov/
chapters/
Jun10DataBook-
Sec2.pdf](http://www.medpac.gov/chapters/Jun10DataBook-Sec2.pdf)

For more information on Medicare see: [http://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Medicare
\(United States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicare_(United_States))