



The Voter

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Focus: Revitalizing Civic Learning in California

Civics Education and Civic Engagement were chosen as priorities at our Annual Meeting last June. Two opportunities to discuss these topics are coming up and we hope you will be part of them

Our meeting on February 22 will feature a discussion of the Civic Education Initiative undertaken last summer. California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson joined together to establish the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning to assess the civic learning landscape and craft recommendations to ensure that all California students gain the knowledge, skills and values they need. The diverse group of task force members includes LWVC president Jennifer Waggoner.

As the low voter turnout in the critical San Bernardino elections demonstrates, there is a crisis in civic participation. Studies of civic education in our schools show a need to do better

- Nationally, less than half of eligible young people ages 18-24 voted in the 2012 elections.
- A telephone survey of 1000 Americans of voting age revealed that members of the general public are more likely to be able to name the judges on American Idol than on the United States Supreme Court.
- In California, a survey of 2,366 high school seniors revealed that just 60 percent could answer questions designed to test their knowledge of the structures and functions of government and of current political issues.

We invite you to join us to discuss civic education and engagement and the task force's draft recommendations. We have invited students from Valley College and Cal State San Bernardino to give us their perspectives on civic education and what has motivated them to be engaged and involved. We have also invited the San Bernardino City Unified School District's new Director of Community Partnerships, Hector Murrieta, and the District's Director of Secondary Education, Ronnie Henderson, is preparing a report on civics education for us. Lots of food for thought!

And MARK YOUR CALENDARS for March 25. We have an opportunity to provide feedback to the task force's draft recommendations at a Task Force Regional Meeting at the San Bernardino County Schools office.

LEAGUE MEETING

Civics Education and Civic Engagement

Saturday, February 22, 2014
2 - 4 p.m.

Feldheim Library
Kellogg Room B
555 6th Street
San Bernardino

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

This month my message will consist of updates on things that are happening and on issues we have been following.

BIG CHANGES FOR LWVSB

The big change is that 568 North Mountain View is no longer our address. It is now PO Box 3394, San Bernardino 92413. Our League had rented office space there since the 1970s when we actually had an office open to the public, thanks to the generosity of the Kruepers, who owned the building until this summer. We had an office manager, Grace DeLong, who worked for us to help her accrue Social Security benefits.

But times have changed and the space became a luxurious storage unit, so when the building changed hands, the board was forced to consider whether we should keep it. We decided that we don’t need that much space to store our files and a few other items we want to keep. We will now get our mail at the post office box to which Valerie Lichtman and I have keys. We are still deciding what to do about a phone, but for now, calls are directed to me. If people call 889-8600, they get a message saying the number is changed to 338-4163.

The web site has an link to my e-mail that is league@lwvsanbernardino.ca.lwvnet.org. And Shirley Harlan has provided a storage shed exclusively for the reams of paper and other things we have accumulated over our almost 59 years of existence. Shirley, Marilyn Patterson, Jill Vassilakos-Long, Susan Nieblas and I started the culling (what Erna Schuiling called “ruthless pruning”) of the cupboards, drawers, and bookshelves, and Shirley, Susan Longville, and I completed the task on the day we moved what we want to keep to Shirley’s. We had the help of Shirley’s neighbor and a young man who lives next door to the building. The furniture, typewriters, and other items we don’t need found a home at Habitat for Humanity’s ReStore in Redlands.

COUNTY CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ORDINANCE

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors recently approved amendments to its Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance and its contract with the Fair Political Practices Commission for enforcement of the ordinance. An article in The Sentinel indicated that among the amendments was raising the contribution limits, which raised concerns about what was in the ordinance. It turns out that the increased amounts bring the county into compliance with the cost-of-living increases in the campaign contributions limits that are in the state’s Political Reform Act. Therefore, we are satisfied that the amendments that the Supervisors approved do not change anything. They clarify the requirements of the Campaign Reform Ordinance, make the ordinance more closely follow the requirements of the Political Reform Act, and clarify the services to be provided by the FPPC.

LWVSB BEGINS WORK ON CIVIC EDUCATION

Come to the meeting for some stimulating discussion of the recommendations of the Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning and the state of civics learning in area high schools. As a result of this meeting, we want to be able to offer input at the meeting the Task Force will be holding at the County Schools office on March 25. The recommendations can be found at <http://www.myboe.org/go/group/name/CivicLearningTaskforce>. Light refreshments will be served.

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN BERNARDINO

Address: PO Box 3394

Phone: (909)338-4163

San Bernardino, CA 92413

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - 94 YEARS OF A MIGHTY POLITICAL EXPERIMENT

February 14, 2014 is the 94th anniversary of the founding of the *League of Women Voters of the United States*.

It seems to me that a tribute to our founders, led by Carrie Chapman Catt, is in order. This is an excerpt from former LWVUS president Nancy Neuman's book *The League of Women Voters in Perspective: 1920-1995* as the League was celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Nonpartisanship, consensus on issues, study before action and concerted advocacy are central to the League's philosophy. These core values can be traced directly to the predecessor organization, the National American Women's Suffrage Association. (NAWSA) In 1919, at the 50th convention of that organization, president Carrie Chapman Catt proposed a League of Women Voters "to finish the fight" and "aid in the reconstruction of the nation." The fight to be finished was winning national woman suffrage and eliminating other forms of political and legal discrimination against women. Reconstruction of the nation meant educating citizens with the goal of strengthening American democracy in a chaotic post-war period. On February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was finally ratified, the League was launched as an independent organization.

The League was designed to be different, a "mighty political experiment." The League would be "the big, composite, nonpartisan body, with its clarification place for partisan complexities, its common meeting

ground for the furtherance of principles, ideals and issues.

Carrie Chapman Catt said the League would be "an anomaly; we are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things; we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship....we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan."

Throughout its history, the League has brought women's voices to major public policy issues, work that has advanced the status of women in American society. It began with a program of reform issues that it inherited from the NAWSA. The woman suffragists in NAWSA long awaited the day when women nationwide could directly influence legislation as voters. The first League program included: protecting women factory workers against sweatshop conditions; promoting pay based on occupation, not gender; maternal health and child welfare; independent citizenship and equal property rights for married women; uniform marriage and divorce laws; jury service for women; election law reform; a Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor; pure food laws; prevention of venereal disease; a merit system at all levels of government; and compulsory education.

-Gloria Anderson, President of the League of Women Voters of San Bernardino

Truncated Broadcasts of County Supervisors' Meetings?

One of the San Bernardino League's members has notified us that the public comments at the end of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors' meetings has gone missing from some broadcasts. We checked with Michelle Moreno, Board Services Supervisor and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. She checked with their Multimedia Department and confirmed that the meetings are recorded in their entirety. Complete DVDs are then disseminated to: Apple Valley, Time Warner, Channel 97 of Big Bear Lake, Channel 6 Television of Big Bear Lake, Channel 34/3 High Desert TVHD, KRTO Channel 3 of the City of Rialto,

KCSB Channel 3 of San Bernardino, and Upland High School Channel 17.

We spot-checked with the station managers who we could reach this afternoon. All stated that their policy is to play the meeting in full, including the public comments.

We're continuing to check into this. If you see a truncated broadcast of the meeting, please contact Jill Vassilakos-Long at jvlong@csusb.edu or (909)537-7541).

Background Information for Civic Learning Discussion

The California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning recently published *Revitalizing Civic Learning in California: A Call to Action*. It is posted on their website. Please read it to prepare for the League discussions on civic learning. The document points out that civic engagement can take many forms: writing to representatives, speaking in government meetings, serving on a jury, and understanding current issues to participate in discussions with others in the community. It points to the crucial role schools play in exposing students to the knowledge, skills, and values needed to fully participate in our democracy. The Task Force states that now is the time to revitalize civic learning, pointing out that we are in the midst of a number of mandated major educational reforms including the implementation of new curricular standards in many areas, revision of the Academic Performance Index, implementation of the new Local Control Funding Formula, and current efforts to redesign assessment systems that will be utilized in 2016. No matter what you think of this “perfect storm” of reform, it is clear that it provides a golden opportunity to ensure that civic learning is integrated into the new curriculum. The Task Force outlines the curricular outcomes and well-researched educational strategies for incorporating civic learning into K-12 education.

Here are some excerpts from the report:

Civic Learning Outcomes

Civic Knowledge

- Understand history, geography, law and economics
- Understand constitutional concepts such as separation of powers and due process
- Understand democratic processes and how our government works
- Understand the issues of the day

Civic Skills

- Be able to gather and process information, listen, think critically, speak in public and engage in discussion and debate
- Be able to collaborate, build consensus and take collective action to address community issues
- Be able to vote, perform jury duty and communicate with policy makers

Civic Values

- Demonstrate concern for the rights and well-being of others
- Tolerate a variety of perspectives
- Have a sense of civic duty
- Be predisposed to take action to change things for the better

Six Proven Practices

- **Classroom instruction in government, history, law and democracy**, striking a balance between teaching important facts and documents -- such as the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights -- and demonstrating their relevance to today's society.
- **Discussion of current events and controversial issues**, including their relevance to young people's lives
- **Service learning experiences that are directly linked to curriculum and instruction** and that give students a chance to apply what they are learning
- **Extracurricular activities** that give students opportunities to get involved in their schools and communities and to work together toward common goals
- **Student participation in school governance** to cultivate a sense of responsibility and give young people a real voice in how their classrooms and schools are run
- **Simulations of democratic processes**, such as voting, mock trials, model United Nations and simulations of legislative deliberation

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

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***League of Women Voters:
Because democracy is not a spectator sport!***

Upcoming Events

Feb. 15 10am-noon p.m. Meet the candidates for the 31st Congressional District at the Democratic Luncheon Club Headquarters (295 Carousel Mall #136 - near the glass elevator) (enter on 2nd St.)

Feb. 22: LWVSB Membership Meeting: Civic Education and Civic Engagement. Feldheim Library, Kellogg Room B, 2-4 p.m.



**"STRIVING
★ ★ ★ FOR ★ ★ ★
EQUAL RIGHTS
FOR ALL"**

Woman Suffrage in Nebraska 1855-1882
The years 1855-1882 were the most important in the history of Nebraska. It was during this period that the right to vote for the white male citizen was granted. The movement to include the colored citizen began.