



# The VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters, San Bernardino Area

Co-Presidents: Gloria Anderson and Jill Vassilakos-Long

VOTER Editor: Dotti Garcia

June, 2016

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jill Vassilakos-Long, Co-President

### MEETING MARK SCOTT

San Bernardino's new City Manager, Mark Scott, was the speaker at the League of Women Voters of San Bernardino Area's Annual Meeting. He spoke about his decision to come to San Bernardino, his agreement with the City Council, and his hopes for the city.

Mr. Scott's job interview was scheduled for December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, he heard about the mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center. He was certain that no one would be able to spare the time to interview him the next day, and called to express sympathy and understanding. But no one answered the phone---so, not knowing what to expect, Mr. Scott made the trip on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to come in for his interview. He was impressed that Mayor Davis, Councilwoman Virginia Marquez and Councilman Rikke Van Johnson were there to interview him. He told us that they had clearly not slept, they were exhausted and grieving, and that when they spoke to him, they spoke about their love of the community. He had been considering winding down his career, had taken stock of his professional accomplishments, and they were more than sufficient. He was balanced on the choice of retiring or finding a project worth his time. He told us that he was looking for a mission, and that when he heard our mayor and councilmembers, he knew that he had found it.

They offered him the position of interim City Manager, and he answered them with a counter-proposal: a one-year contract as City Manager, renewable, and with no severance obligations, along with a council agreement that they would adopt a new charter, one that would support the rational functioning of the city. He did not believe that the city could come out of bankruptcy successfully with the current city charter. They agreed.

Mr. Scott spoke about the community he has found in San Bernardino. He congratulated us on the strong civic infrastructure of the neighborhood associations, and stated that San Bernardino not only needs good city management, but deserves good city management.

One of Mr. Scott's former positions was in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It was a city that had lost its economy. The main industry had been textile manufacturing, and when those jobs went overseas there was little left. He said it was a great place to learn how to get things done without any money. (You work in the communities, and develop partnerships).

Mr. Scott took numerous questions from our group. His responses were thoughtful and revealed a wealth of experience. In response to a question about the homeless encampments, he pointed out that the homeless are not a homogenous group. There are people who have lost jobs and need specific services to get back on their feet. There are

other people who are mentally ill and need support services. The issue must be handled on a case-by-case basis. He pointed out that nearly every county seat has a disproportionate homeless population, because the homeless are sent to the county seat to receive existing services. So, one issue is commensurate funding. There are also issues of health and safety in the encampments, and issues of crime, safety and vandalism in the surrounding areas. He feels strongly that the encampments need to be gently dismantled, in a way that provides help, support and options for people who currently live in them.

In response to a question about the historic lack of services to some neighborhoods, Mr. Scott took notes. He mentioned that one step in developing service for underserved areas is to warn council members that they will begin to get complaints---because when people who had given up on the city, begin to have hope, when they believe that they might be heard----then they complain, as they should!

In summary, I believe that City Manager Mark Scott will give us all great hope in the coming year!

Jill Vassilakos-Long

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### **MESSAGE FROM LWV NATIONAL PRESIDENT, ELISABETH MCNAMARA**

On Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of League members from around the country convened in Washington, D.C. for our national convention. The first activity on the agenda is a day on Capitol Hill, where League members will meet with their Senators and Representatives to advocate for the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

**Add your voice to theirs! Tell your Senators and Representatives to move the Voting Rights Advancement Act forward.**

Nearly three years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court gutted key provisions of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Since then, [some] states and localities have used every tool available to make voting harder. Without Congressional action to repair the VRA, 2016 will mark the first presidential election in 50 years without its full protections. Throughout the 2016 primaries, we saw voters face a variety of obstacles from reduced polling places to long lines to removal of registered voters from the rolls, and these challenges are just a canary in the coal mine for what's to come in November without the VRA's protections...

The Voting Rights Advancement Act was introduced to address the voting discrimination unleashed in the wake of the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision. Yet the legislation is being held up on both sides of Congress.

It is unfortunate that discrimination in voting against racial, ethnic and language minorities continues in America. This should be unacceptable in the greatest democracy in the world. **It's time we call on our Senators and Representatives to take action and end voting discrimination in this country.**

Elisabeth McNamara, President, League of Women Voters

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Mail to LWVSB Area, P.O. Box 3394, San Bernardino, CA 92413

#### Dues Payment--LWVSB

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues Payment of Individual \$60 ; Family \$90 ; Student, \$30

## **MORE ON THE ANNUAL MEETING of June 4th**

Gloria Anderson, Co-President

The Annual Meeting is a time when we make decisions that will guide what we do in the coming League year that begins on July 1.

We are in good shape financially, thanks in part to the Davis Trust Fund that continues to grow and which we have not had to dip into. Our decision not to attend the LWVUS convention in Washington, DC this month also resulted in a huge saving of funds that had been budgeted. And there was no LWVC Council this year, so we saved on that, also.

We affirmed our local program positions, and added to our Civic Engagement and Learning, a commitment to educating voters about the proposed San Bernardino City Charter, which is likely to go before the voters in November. We will also have as many as 30 propositions on that ballot---obviously, we will face a challenge to educate voters about them as well. **We hope you will think about becoming one of those educators by volunteering for our Speakers Bureau.** We will have training for that. Water issues seem to be emerging, also. We will be looking into the Nestle water issue this year.

We also elected a Board of Directors, some of whom are continuing for a second year of a two-year term, including Jill and me as co-presidents. Others are starting a two year term, such as Nancy Ruth White of Redlands. Susan Nieblas is returning to the Board as Secretary.

Finally, a reminder that dues are due on July 1. \$60 for individuals, \$90 for households and \$30 for students. Please mail your check to LWVSB Area, P.O. Box 3394, San Bernardino, CA 92413. Thank you.

Onward to a new year!

*Gloria Anderson*

### **LWVSB's Involvement in Proposed San Bernardino City Charter**

A major issue for League's involvement during the coming year is the proposed San Bernardino City Charter, which is probably going to be on the ballot in November. The City Council voted to proceed with the requirements to put it on the ballot, with a public hearing which was held on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Several of our members attended that hearing, at which time there were questions from some of the Councilpersons about language regarding elections, etc. Another hearing will be held on July 13<sup>th</sup>, and League members are encouraged to attend and speak in favor of the proposed charter, as presented by the Charter Review Committee which has worked almost two years to recommend a NEW charter for the city.

Another meeting was put together by some members of the Charter Review Committee to discuss next steps. Out of that meeting emerged a group of people committed to forming a campaign committee to begin planning for passage of the ballot measure, assuming that it will be on the ballot. League members on the interim planning committee are **Betsy Starbuck, John Longville, Susan Longville and Dotti Garcia**. As soon as all the legal requirements for a campaign committee are met, others will be asked to fulfill various roles, and you will be hearing more.

## CHARTER EDUCATION

In addition to actual advocacy for the proposed San Bernardino City Charter, such as working on the campaign, League members are also committed to educating the voting public about the issues involved. **Shirley Harlan and Dotti Garcia** have put together some plans for voter education. These plans include speakers about very basic principles, such as “What is a charter?,” “What are the common forms of city government?,” “How are most cities in California governed?,” “What’s the difference between electing officers such as City Clerk, and City Attorney, and appointing them?” Several meetings will be set up in various venues in the city, and League members are urged to volunteer to assist with these. Please call **Shirley Harlan (882-4057)** to find out how you can help with this educational aspect.

**Many of our members do not live within the city limits of San Bernardino. This is no reason to opt out of involvement in this issue. What happens in the city of San Bernardino affects the entire region!**

## NEWS FROM LWVCalifornia

At its May 15 meeting the LWVC Board voted to take positions on additional measures expected to be on the November ballot. By the end of June, the board will consider all the initiatives that qualify for the ballot.

The LWVC will support:

- School Bonds. Funding for K-12 School and Community College Facilities. Authorizes \$7 billion in general obligation bonds for K-12 and \$2 billion for community colleges.
- Legislature. Legislation and Proceedings. Requires all bills to be posted online at least 72 hours before a floor vote and video recordings of legislative proceedings to be posted within 24 hours.
- Criminal Sentences. Juvenile Criminal Proceedings and Sentencing. Allows earlier parole consideration and credit for good behavior for adults inmates; entrusts to the juvenile court the decision by which a juvenile is transferred to adult court.
- Death Penalty. Repeals the death penalty and replaces it with life without possibility of parole.
- Firearms. Ammunition Sales. Tightens California gun safety laws and regulates the sale of ammunition.
- Referendum to Overturn Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags. Referendum on a 2014 law that would apply to cities and counties that do not have their own single-use carryout bag ordinances. (Remember, with a referendum, a yes vote is to keep the law the way it was enacted and a no vote is to overturn the law.)
- English Language Education. Repeals parts of Proposition 27 of 1998 to allow school districts and county offices of education to determine the best language instruction methods and language acquisition programs to implement.

The board also voted to oppose:

- Carry-out Bags. Charges. An initiative sponsored by opponents of the single-use plastic bag law. It would change where the revenue from the sales of paper or reusable bags would be directed.
- Death penalty. Procedures. Greatly shortens the time allowed for death penalty appeals.

## Voter's Edge California

Carol Moon Goldberg, LWVCEducationFund Vice-President

Voter's Edge California is up and running in 31 counties, and League volunteers are busy encouraging candidates to participate and promoting the use of this important voter education tool. We hope to expand the number of participating counties in the November election. Please continue to promote the use of Voter's Edge California at all voter service events. Below is an enlarged picture of the front of available bookmarks that can be passed out at events. On the reverse side are the following: 1) Use your address to get a personalized ballot. 2) Get in-depth info on candidates, measures, and who supports them. 3) Check where, when and how to vote. 4) Keep track of your choices and use them to vote. 5) Share your choices and be a part of the conversation!



