



San Diego VOTER

Vol. 72 No. 7

September 2008

Fires In San Diego – We're Still Not Ready!

“Lunch with League” is back and promises to be another series of stimulating and informative programs this year on a monthly basis. We will continue to meet at Tom Ham’s Lighthouse Restaurant because we love the food and service (the view is not bad either...). Come join us – fill your minds and your tummies – and catch up with your League friends. Please remember that these events are open to the public (read “friends and families”), so please spread the word about this important topic. See the registration form on the flyer enclosed with this *Voter*.

Former San Diego Fire Chief Jeff Bowman resigned from his job due to frustrations with the City of San Diego over developing the fire department in a way that could protect its citizens as much as possible from deadly wildfires. The San Diego Regional Fire Safety Forum was formed to specify what needs to be done to achieve that goal. It is composed of a cross-section of fire professionals, fire experts, and concerned citizens who are “frustrated with the lack of progress toward improved fire protection in the San Diego region.” Jeff Bowman will describe some of the problems and new technolo-

gies in fighting fires and provide us with his recommended solutions. He will also address under-funding, under-equipping and under-staffing as well as regional, military, and state-wide cooperation. We will learn what we, as homeowners, can do to help prevent fire from spreading so rapidly. Bowman will critique Proposition A on the November ballot which establishes a Regional Fire Protection Agency and imposes a \$52 parcel tax to fund it.

At the County LWV Convention last June, a position on regional fire protection was adopted by concurrence with that of the East County LWV. It reads: Fire Protection-- Support a county regional fire protection and emergency medical system supported by a sustainable source of funding for prevention and suppression of fires-increased cooperation among cities and unincorporated fire agencies as may apply.

This is a new League issue for all of us living in San Diego County – come and be informed by a dynamic and very knowledgeable speaker on September 24th!

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

U. S. Constitution Day

Celebrate U.S. Constitution Day with “***Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Protecting the U.S. Constitution***”, which centers on information about judicial candidates and how they are selected, the role that judges play in interpreting the law, and the differences in roles of the state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

Wednesday, September 17, 5:30 to 7:30 pm
City Heights–Weingart Library, 3795 Fairmount Ave.

Speakers are:

Patricia Cowett, Superior Court Judge (retired);
Del Dickson, Chair, Department of Political Science and International Relations,
University of San Diego; and a **high school Debate Club demonstration**.

This event is supported by the LWV Education Fund and by a grant from the Program on Constitutional and Legal Policy of the Open Society Institute. Partners include Lawyers Club, American Civil Liberties Union, and others TBA.

Questions: 619.223.8074 or ahoiberg@aol.com

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June 2008 - July 2009
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Admin. Assistant Genoveva Martinez
Flexible hours — (call ahead, please)
Phone: (858) 483-8696 FAX: (858) 483-8396

Email: lwwsd@san.rr.com

Website: www.lwvsandiego.org
SmartVoter: www.smartvoter.org

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Save the Date!

October "Lunch with League"

**"The Politics of Redistricting:
What's at Stake"**

plus Pros and Cons of
City of San Diego Ballot Measures

11:30 am, Tom Ham's Restaurant

Letter from Co-President Anne Hoiberg

As noted on page 4, a new LWVUS Immigration Policy has been developed, which promotes family reunification. Some time ago I wrote this story which shows how strongly children are affected by parental separation.

Immigration: a Child's Version

Among children, the most painful emotion felt is that of fear, especially the loss of a parent. It seemed to me that, as a child, I had an overabundance of fears that leaped up one or two at a time with unwarranted regularity. For instance, on one typical shopping day when I was a four-year-old, I recall that I stopped feeling my mom's hand holding mine, and I knew, during an endless few minutes, that I would never see her again. Just as my fear reached tears level, my mom's hand magically found mine. The trip ended happily, but for an instant, a moment of anxiety had swept over me.

When I was in the first grade, I experienced the most dreaded fear of all. At that time, my mother had to decide whether or not to give up her Danish citizenship and become an American citizen. During her few years in America, she had learned to speak and read English by listening to the radio and studying newspapers and books. Her three children and also helped speed her fluency in English. When she was scheduled to appear before the Kane County Board of Naturalization, my English-speaking mother supposedly had mastered all of the information required to become a naturalized American citizen.

On the day my parents embarked on their naturalization trip to Geneva, Illinois, the county seat, I was left in the care of my older sister and Mrs. Barthold, our neighbor, who agreed to check on us throughout the afternoon.

During the first hour, I amused myself with a coloring book and paper dolls, but a fear surfaced to interfere with my play. With this fear steadily engulfing me, I approached my sister, who was deeply engrossed in a book. I asked, what happens if mom doesn't know the answers to all of the questions?

My sister didn't look up from her book. I repeated the question: Finally, she paused and announced exasperatedly, if she flunks the test, they'll send her back to Denmark!

I retorted, what? How can that be? Again, she reluctantly replied, if she doesn't remember everything about America, she can't be a citizen and they'll ship her back to Denmark. But when could that be? I implored. She answered, Dad will have to drive her immediately to the train station to board a train for New York where she'll be booked on a ship back to Denmark. She'll be on her way today.

I was beside myself with a full load of fear, But, what about me? My sister took a deep breath and explained, you are an American citizen; you will stay here. She is not an American citizen; she will have to go back. It's as simple as that: you stay in your country, and she stays in hers.

There was no point in pursuing this discussion or the hope of alleviating my most painful of all fears: I would never see my mother again.

(continued on page 3)

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to informed and active public participation in government policy and decision-making. The League engages in education and advocacy on behalf of the public interest and welcomes full participation in its activities by all members of the public.

(continued from page 2)

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Barthold appeared on a pop-in visit, and I asked her when she thought my mother would return. She said that I could be assured that my Dad's car would soon be turning into the driveway. I wasn't reassured by that answer; Mrs. Barthold didn't even mention that my mom would be in the car.

I then decided to position myself at the window facing the driveway, a location better suited for sitting in vigil: watching for the car and counting the number of occupants. The window soon steamed over with my anxious breathing as I pressed closer to the pane. Finally, through the smeared window, I saw my Dad's car, and on closer inspection, there were two people in the car. I squinted at the car. My dad's passenger was my mom! I erupted from my post, running through the house, glancing with a sneer at my oblivious sister, and out the door to greet my mother.

In her best motherly voice, she gently explained that she had passed the test, and that she, too, was now an American citizen. No, there was no way she would be sent back to Denmark. Again, this adventure ended happily, very happily indeed, especially when my mom suggested that we celebrate this joyous occasion with ice cream—and American apple pie!

Again, as we can all see from our own experiences, the League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families.

---- Anne Hoiberg, LWVSD Co-President

Storybank- another in our new series

In 1968 I married and moved from the San Francisco Bay Area to San Diego. I had married into a family that paid attention to the state and national politics, but not so much to those that were local. A San Francisco friend and League member, told me that if I wanted to know what was going on locally, I should join the League of Women Voters. So I did.

I was working, so the unit I joined was the La Jolla evening unit. After dinner, I and some wonderful women, who filled me with awe and admiration got together to discuss issues of importance at all levels of government.

In 1984 I took early retirement and now attended the daytime La Jolla unit since all those wonderful women from the evening unit had jobs with the city and other organizations and the evening unit was disbanded.

I had been attending City College, taking computer courses, learning to program, as well as bookkeeping classes, preparing myself for my next career.

As it turned out, my "next career" was the League of Women Voters. In 1986 I was elected Secretary to the Board, then president in 1988, served in that capacity for 3 years, was then elected to the State Board and served there for 4 years, followed by chairing various committees at the state and local level. After being chair of the La Jolla unit for (I'm told) at least 14 years, I decided it was time to retire.

Retired from being unit chair, but never, of course, retired from the League of Women Voters. It has been too much a part of my life and has contributed so much to my life, that I will always be a "Leaguer"

---Alice McCauley

You are Invited to a
Common Cause Meeting
The Yin and Yang of City Council
How San Diego's City Council can learn to work together
for the benefit of our city.

Donna Frye and Carl DeMaio will present their case
for a stronger City Council.

Saturday, September 20th
12:00 noon to 2:00 PM
Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Library
9005 Aero Drive
San Diego, CA 92123



LWVUS Position on Immigration

After many months of educating ourselves and intense discussions involving thousands of dedicated Leaguers all over the country, not to mention the four luncheon forums we held here in San Diego, LWVUS has distilled our position into the following statement and criteria.

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Our consensus compared to National

If you are interested in how our submission to LWVUS compared with the consensus from Leagues all over the country, we were in pretty close agreement with the above statement. We did, however, give high priority to the statement "Some unauthorized immigrants should be deported and some should be allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of U.S. employers," but this statement is not in the final position of the LWVUS.

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

September Unit Meetings: PROS and CONS of State Propositions

Monday, Sept. 8 9:30 - 11:30 AM	Rancho Bernardo and Scripps Ranch	San Diego National Bank Community Rm. 2nd Fl. 16789 Bernardo Ctr. Drive San Diego, CA 92128	Bev Wilson (858) 592-9664 Irene Dunny (858) 204-6766
Monday, Sept. 8 5:30 - 7:30 PM	Mission Valley	Mission Valley Library 2123 Fenton Parkway San Diego, CA 92108 (near IKEA & Costco)	Debra Blum (619) 225-0353 Karen Beeson (619) 475-8236
Tuesday, Sept. 9 1:00 - 3:00 PM	University City	North University City Community Library 8820 Judicial Drive San Diego, CA 92122	Joyce Janette (858) 278-7855 Mary McDonald (619) 542-1438
Tuesday, Sept. 9 9:30 - 11:30 AM	La Jolla	La Jolla Public Library 7555 Draper Avenue La Jolla, CA 92037	Sherry Bloom 858-459-7598 619-200-0300 (cell) 858-459-3851 (Office) Ex. 133
Wednesday, Sept. 10 9:30 - 11:30 AM	North Shores/ Point Loma	LWVSD Office 4901 Morena Blvd. Bldg., 100, Ste. 104 San Diego, CA 92117	Shirley Walkoe (619) 542-1438 Nancy Witt (619) 222-7230
Wednesday, Sept. 10 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Tierrasanta	Villa Monterey Club House 5275 Rimpark/Apple Tree Dr. San Diego, CA 92124	Carole Porter (858) 279-5474
Thursday, Sept. 11 9:15 - 11:15 AM	East San Diego	College Rolando Library 6600 Montezuma Street San Diego, CA 92115	Barbara Evje (619)-462-4772
Saturday, Sept. 13 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Southeast Unit	Malcolm X Library Market & Euclid San Diego, CA 91945	Vergie Wright (619) 264-6735

LWVSD Calendar — September

September			
9/1	Mon.		<i>Labor Day</i>
9/2	Tues.	6:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
9/4	Thurs.	9:30 am	Unit Council, LWVSD Office
9/5	Fri.	10:30 am	County League Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
9/5	Fri.	12:45 pm	City Government Update Study Committee, LWVSD Office
9/6	Sat.	10:00 am	Introduction to League, home of Shirley Larson
Sept. 8-13			UNITS - PROS and CONS of State Propositions
9/15	Mon.	10:00 am	Membership Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
9/17	Wed.	5:30 pm	U.S. Constitution Day, City Heights Library
9/17	Wed.	9:30 am	Education Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
9/23	Tues.	2:00 pm	Introduction to League, 641 Orange Ave. Coronado
9/24	Wed.	11:30 am	Lunch with League: Jeff Bowman - Fires in San Diego - We're Still Not Ready, Tom Ham's Restaurant, Harbor Island
9/26	Fri.	9:30 am	Public Policy Meeting, LWVSD Office
9/29			<i>Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown</i>

Tempers Flare at “Will We Get it Straight in 2008?”

Deborah Seiler, San Diego County’s Registrar of Voters, and Derek Cressman, Common Cause advocate, faced off with some riled-up voters in the Mission Valley Library meeting room July 27. The event was co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and Common Cause.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the National Popular Vote, Voting by Mail (mandatory and voluntary), Voter ID issues, and Voter Integrity. Due to interruptions from one woman, it was difficult to understand Cressman’s description of the NPV movement, a movement on which the LWWUS voted to have a national short study.

He enumerated flaws in the Electoral College system, faulting the winner-take-all process of each state’s electoral votes for disenfranchising two-thirds of the nation’s 50 states outcomes. The fact that NPV would correct those problems was difficult to understand because he was interrupted over and over again. It seems that some of the attendees came only to discuss voting integrity and were confusing it with the NPV and other items on the agenda. In the end, those who came to hear about the other issues went away dissatisfied and the ones who only wanted to discuss voting integrity were able to turn off some of their potential allies.

Cressman claims that soon both candidates will be focusing on a few battleground states, effectively cutting off feedback from blue states and red states, in favor of purple states with less predictable voter outcomes.

Seiler discussed voluntary voting-by-mail, citing a 54 percent rise in San Diego County mail-in votes in recent years. She credits mail-in ballots with helping ease congestion at the polls, and allowing people time to think carefully about their choices. Registrar of Voters employees start counting mail-in ballots 7-10 days before Election Day, she said. Cressman cited efforts in Oregon to bring in new voters through vote-by-mail legislation.

Questions were often hypotheticals, without listening to the answers. Other questioners expressed a range of citizen disillusionment with fair elections over the past eight years. Why should privately owned voting machine corporations manage vote counting? Why don’t citizen volunteers hand count votes? How can we prevent insider fraud?

Seiler sees many problems with counting votes by hand, as some districts have 50 to 60 candidates and issues to be considered. Hand counting seems to be the least viable method of obtaining results quickly and efficiently, she said. But she continued, if Secretary of State Debra Bowen said we must hand count the votes then we would do what she says.

For more information on the National Popular Vote campaign and AB 2948, visit www.nationalpopularvote.com

---Kathy Hughart, Public Relations

Election News!

The November election starts early for the LWW. Our **Unit meetings** in the second week of September will be the first meeting on the propositions, starting with the State issues. At the October Unit meetings we will finish reviewing the pros and cons of the propositions. Our members so often feel that they must rush through the issues; two meetings will allow us to have more discussion time.

The State propositions cover a potpourri of subjects: passenger train bonds, treatment of farm animals, Children’s Hospital bonds, early parental notification for abortion, treatment of non-violent drug offenders, changes in criminal penalties and laws, renewable energy mandated by specific dates, limiting “marriage” to a man and a woman, victims’ rights and parole, a \$5 billion bond act to encourage alternative fuels, a veterans’ bond act, and the very important redistricting proposition.

As you can see, this election is exciting and critical for the issues as well as for the election of the president! Plan to attend both meetings, and invite your friends.

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

League of Women Voters of San Diego
"Lunch with League"

 **Fires**  **in San Diego - We're Still Not Ready!**

Speaker:

Jeff Bowman, Former San Diego Fire Chief

Bowman will present the many changes needed to protect the San Diego region from wildfires which have been developed by the San Diego Regional Fire Safety Forum.

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Tom Ham's Lighthouse Restaurant, Harbor Island

Cost: \$25 LWV members; \$30 non-members

Directions to Tom Ham's:

Harbor Dr. west to the airport; turn left at Harbor Island Dr.; proceed two short blocks and veer right.

Continue past hotels and marinas to the end of the island.

Parking is free.

Join LWV and be directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong.

Lunch with League:

 **Fires**  **in San Diego - We're Still Not Ready!**

Reservations must be received by September 19.

Mail check to LWVSD, 4901 Morena Blvd., #104, San Diego, CA 92117

Questions: 858-483-8696

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Guest(s) _____

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Phone _____ E-mail _____

Enclosed: \$ _____ (\$25 LWV members) _____ (\$30 non-members) \$Donation: _____



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LWVSD Diversity Policy

The LWVSD, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there should be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League of Women Voters on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. LWVSD recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. LWVSD subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. LWVSD affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its Board, staff and programs.

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