



Beach Cities Voter

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities

serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach

BEACH CITIES LEAGUE TACKLES

COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM *by Maggie Wilkinson and June Eicker*

In line with other Leagues in the County of Los Angeles, members of the Beach Cities met in October to kick off an effort to update the League’s position on county government. The existing position was studied and formalized by League members over 25 years ago, at a time when the population of LA was about 7 million. With over 10 million people today, the County of Los Angeles now tops the list of most populated counties in the nation. And when compared to state populations, the County is more populated than 42 states.

The County’s population of 10 million gives it clout at higher levels of government, where residents are represented by 14 senators and 25 assembly members to state government and by 17 representatives to the US Congress. But at the County level, residents are represented by only 5 supervisors elected from districts of 2,000,000 residents each. In other words, these supervisors, who have executive, legislative and quasi-judicial power, govern a population larger than most states.

Type of Elected Official in Los Angeles County	No of Elected Officials	Residents / Elected Official
County Supervisor	5	2,000,000
Assembly Member	25	714,000
State Senator	15	400,000
US Congressional Member	17	588,000

At the October meeting, a study committee briefed members on the history, structure and key services provided by the County, including law enforcement, health and social services, recreation and cultural amenities, environmental protection, and public works. In connection with these County services, members examined the role the County plays as an administrative arm of federal and state governments, since over 55% of the County's revenue now comes from those sources and is specifically earmarked for mandated programs. And members also looked at the responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Officer, who is appointed by the Board and serves at the Board’s pleasure.

At the conclusion of the meeting, members discussed arguments for and against separation of the executive and legislative functions of the Board of Supervisors and whether the Board's administrative functions should be handled by an elected Chief Executive Officer. Some members also thought that there may be alternative governance models to consider.

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At our November membership meeting, the study committee will continue to lead a discussion on county government, and will seek consensus on answers for:

- Are the residents of Los Angeles County adequately represented by the five members of the Board of Supervisors?
 - Should the Board be enlarged?
 - What, if any, additional responsibilities should the Board of Supervisors have?
- Should the chief administrative/executive officer be elected or appointed?
 - What is the difference between job responsibilities of a CAO and a CEO and which do you favor for Los Angeles County?

PARTICIPATE IN THE LEAGUE STUDY ON THE COUNTY! The public is welcome!

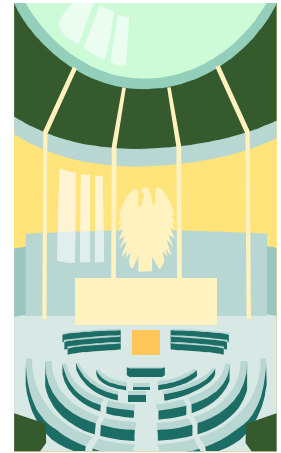
Monday, November 24, from, 7 to 9 pm

at the Manhattan Beach Library, 1320 Highland Avenue

Also, consider attending the Prop 13 Meeting on November 15th (see page 6).

A Few Fast Facts — The County of Los Angeles:

- was established in 1850 — one of the 27 original counties in the state.
- has a population totaling 10 million, of which 9 million live in 88 incorporated cities.
- has 88 incorporated cities, yet 65% of the land in the County remains unincorporated.
- has a budget total of \$16.4 billion, much of which is dependant on the state's budget.
- is represented by Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke in District 2 (which includes Inglewood and Hawthorne), and by Supervisor Don Knabe in District 4 (which includes El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach).
- has one of the largest storm drain systems in the world, in terms of both aerial extent and vertical drop.



(answers to State and Local Finance Quiz on page 3)

1. False. Sales tax, fees, bank and corporation taxes and others account for about 60% of the total budget.
2. True. When everyone pays the same percentage or dollar amount in taxes, it widens the gap between high and low-income earners.
3. False. Less than 10% of the budget goes to CalWORKs.
4. True. This tax deduction costs the state about \$3 billion each year.
5. False. The state pays about 70% of the non-federal dollars for child welfare services.
6. True or False! The dollar amount grows due to enrollment growth, but the dollar per student amount may decrease in some years.
7. False.
8. True. However, fees are becoming an ever increasing way to fund programs.
9. True. Federal aid is about 30% of the budget, bond sales about 5% and state taxes and fees account for the rest of the state budget.
10. It's tough to list just three things, isn't it? The governor and legislature have the same problem: there are many needs but a limited amount of money.

Delegates to the LWVC convention in May chose State and Local Finances (SLF) as one of their Issues for Emphasis. The following article was prepared by a LWVC committee formed to help emphasize this important issue.

What About Tax Expenditures? Tax expenditures were instigated as a special tax treatment to achieve particular social purposes. They may serve worthy goals and in California currently include the deduction for mortgage interest expense, sales tax exemption for food, bank and corporation tax exemptions for employer contributions to health plans, and rate reductions for small corporations.

A tax expenditure is defined as a revenue loss which occurs because of deductions, credits, exclusions and preferential rates in a tax code. Tax expenditures shrink the tax base, and several other aspects of tax expenditures are also problematic to the budget process. Tax expenditures are enacted with a simple majority vote of the legislature. To repeal a tax expenditure, however, requires a two-thirds majority vote, in that repeal is considered a tax increase. Rarely is a tax expenditure put in place with a sunset clause; with little review no one really knows if the expenditure's desired effects are being reached.

Money not collected is not a part of the budget, so once in place, tax expenditures no longer appear as part of any budget document—they are “off budget.” Yet, they account for more than \$20 billion in taxes not collected.

State and Local Finance Quiz (*answers at bottom of page 2*)

- T F** 1. Personal income tax accounts for half of the money raised by the state.
- T F** 2. A regressive tax affects low-income families more than those with higher incomes.
- T F** 3. CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) payments are about 25 percent of the state budget.
- T F** 4. The Home Mortgage Interest Deduction is a tax subsidy.
- T F** 5. The state shares the cost of child welfare programs equally with counties.
- T F** 6. Kindergarten-12 education funding from the state grows every year.
- T F** 7. If California mandates a program, it pays for it.
- T F** 8. Fees for services have traditionally been a way for local government to raise revenue.
- T F** 9. Revenue the state can spend comes from bonds, federal aid, state taxes and state fees.
10. The three most important services for state and local budgets to finance are:
- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

NEXT ISSUE—BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY

The Budget Accountability Act has just qualified for the March ballot. The objective of this initiative is to fix the state's budget process and hold legislators accountable for passing a responsible budget on time.

We're a not-for-profit organization, established in 1920, with the mission of promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. We never support or oppose political candidates. We do advocate on issues that our members have studied and on which we've reached consensus.

All citizens — men and women of voting age — are welcome to join. If you can't attend our monthly meetings and special events, please consider showing your support through your annual membership fee of \$45 (\$65 for household memberships), which is not tax deductible. Donations to the Beach Cities LWV Education Fund are tax deductible.

For more information, you may contact Susan Grebe at membership@beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org or (310) 545-2097. Or just send your check (payable to the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities), to Peggy Bartlett at 701 13th St, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

The League affirms our belief in and our commitment to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. The League recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making.

The League brings the Candidates to the Voters by Linda Mack

The election season was not over with October's Special Gubernatorial Recall Election. For the November 4th local elections, the Beach Cities League sponsored three very successful candidates forums. Together with the Hermosa Beach Women's Club, the League sponsored a forum for the Hermosa Beach City Council candidates. To bring the candidates to even more residents of Hermosa Beach, the League then co-sponsored, with the *Easy Reader*, another forum for these candidates. The League followed these two Hermosa forums with a forum for candidates for the Hawthorne mayoral race, city council race, and Centinela Valley School Board race. These forums were co-sponsored with the Hollyglen Homeowners Association.

A huge *thank you* to moderators Susan Grebe, Jan Nathanson, and Wendy Phillips, and also to screener Peggy Bartlett. The Beach Cities League continues its mission to inform the electorate.

Candidates forums are a long honored tradition in the League, but we need more help to organize and oversee this important voter service. Are you interested in becoming a moderator? Can you assist our moderators by being an usher or by timing candidates' responses? Can you help us issue invitations and ground rules? The League provides training. Call Linda Mack at (310) 545-4738.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization open to all citizens, men and women, of voting age. The League's mission is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League never supports or opposes any political candidate. The League advocates on issues that members have studied and on which members have reached consensus.

Beach Cities Voter

Co-Presidents

Jeanne Leuschner

Jan Nathanson

Editor

Wendy Phillips

Associate Editor

Jeanne Leuschner

Production

The Copy Shop

Susan Grebe

Sunhee Park

Mignon Theim-Murphy

Circulation

Valma Evans

The forces of nature really sent a message to California this week. As I write this it seems that the fire fighters are finally gaining control. This "event" really took politics off of the front pages.

Our "extra" election day is over--and we have a new governor. I worked at the polls with Peggy Bartlett, Susan Grebe and Linda Mack, and it was a busy, busy day. We had a record number of provisional ballots cast due to the new Federal requirement that no voter will be turned away. And fortunately, no problems with "chads" were reported. So on to November 4 for local Elections. We hope that this election in cities in our area will have a good turnout. City Council and School Boards are always very important. Those that serve in those offices are the people that you can personally contact if you have a problem.

In October Maggie Wilkinson and June Eicker presented the first part of the study of the LWV County Government Position. Our meeting in November will determine if we support the position as it is or want to make changes. Come and help us determine if we still want more than five Supervisors. And do we still think an elected Chief Executive is necessary?

Since this Voter is a November-December issue, Jan and I will take this opportunity to wish you all best wishes for the coming holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. We hope to see many of you at our Holiday luncheon and planning session on December 6. And don't forget our meeting on Monday, November 24!



Jeanne

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES Do you have time to help us out? We need volunteers for a variety of tasks, including:

- **Government Observer** — Do you have time to attend (or watch on TV) meetings of city councils, school boards, water districts, or health district?
- **Fundraising!** As our annual dues are only \$45, we need help raising more funds to support our voter outreach activities.
- **Smart Voter Coordinator** — Here is your chance to become active in the League in a position with no rigid schedule. You will be busy only during election times, when you will be talking to candidates for state, county, and local offices. All you need is a computer, internet service, and a desire to get balanced information to voters. For details, email Francis Talbott-White at talbwhite@yahoo.com.

GRASS ROOTS PLANNING FOR LEAGUE'S NATIONAL PRIORITIES Please join us for our holiday get together. After selecting our Program for 2004, we shall enjoy a holiday luncheon. Guests are welcome!

For our potluck lunch, please bring enough for 6 servings. If your last name begins with A-L, bring a hot dish; M-Z bring a salad. Coffee, desert, rolls, punch and champagne will be provided. If you need a ride or further information, please call Valma Evans at (310) 376-2791.

In addition to celebrating the holidays with your League colleagues, please come help us decide what issues you would like to see us focus on at a National level. Our prioritization is an important planning effort that truly reflects the "grass roots" of our organization. After all Leagues have completed similar planning efforts, the results will be compiled by the National League and presented for approval by delegates attending our National Convention this June 11 - 15. So just show up on December 6 and be a part of our dialogue!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, FROM 10 TO 1

921 ROWELL AVENUE, MANHATTAN BEACH (AT THE HOME OF ANN MARTIN)

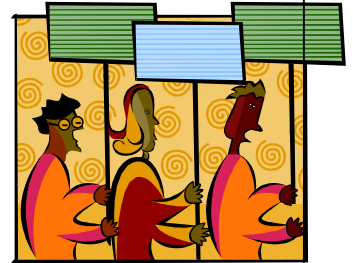
March for Freedom of Choice

April 25, 2004, in Washington DC

<http://www.ppaction.org/PPMarch04/join.html>

Are you interested in marching?

Email Kate Alson at k_alson@yahoo.com



The League of Women Voters of the County and the City of Los Angeles present:

Proposition 13—Twenty Five Years After

Morning Panelists include:

David Janssen, LA County Chief Administrative Officer; Susan F. Rice, former President, LWVC

Fred Silva, Public Policy Institute of California

Lunch Speakers include: Edmund Edelman, former Supervisor, LA County;

Joel Fox, former President, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

Saturday, November 15th, from 9:30 to 2:30

Regency Room, Pickwick Gardens, 1001 Riverside Drive, Burbank

\$35. Please RSVP to Peggy Bartlett at 701 13th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 (310-545-1087).

Name: _____ Phone: _____

_____ Check here if you would like a vegetarian option.

In accordance with the by-laws for the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities, we provide our members with information on our financial status, as summarized below. For the fiscal year 2002-03, we're pleased to have met our budget and substantially increased our cash on hand.

			Budget	Actual	
Income	Dues (\$45 to \$65)	125 members	\$5,625	\$5,768	
	Contributions		\$600	\$4,365	
	Publications		\$100	\$35	
	Fundraising		\$4,955	\$3,978	
	Other		--	\$742	
				\$11,280	\$14,888
Expenses	Operating		\$830	\$850	
	Admin		\$750	\$553	
	Delegates		\$2,225	\$2,289	
	Financial Support to:	County (PMP of \$1.50)		\$200	\$347
		State (PMP of \$8.00)		\$2,250	\$2,079
		National (PMP of \$24.35)		\$2,625	\$2,767
	Newsletter		\$1,875	\$1,715	
	Ed Activities		\$375	\$558	
				\$11,130	\$11,158
			Net income	\$150	\$3,730
	Cash on hand	30-Jun-02		\$7,010	
	Net income			\$3,730	
	Cash on hand	30-Jun-03		\$10,740	

Our operating expenses, totaling \$850, covered our telephone, insurance, supplies, postage, and accounting services.

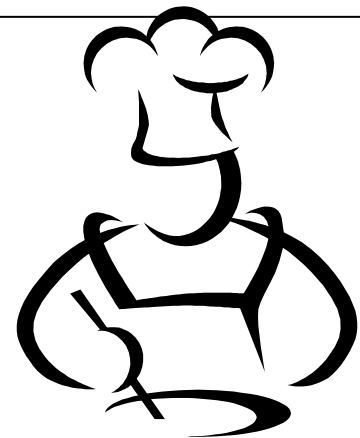
And as part of the LA County interleague organization, the California League, and the National League, we provide — are liable for — financial support for League activities at other levels of government. Referred to as “per member payments,” or PMPs, the amount of financial support is approved by delegates to conventions at the county, state, and national levels.

Our newsletter, which we issue 8 times each year, costs about \$230 per issue — or roughly \$1 for printing and postage of each copy. In addition to sending our newsletter to all members, we distribute to libraries, elected officials, and other Leagues.


After a review of our cash receipts, disbursements, and bank statements, our external accountant found our records to be in good order.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR AT THE FAIR We made a profit of \$944.59 this year, even better than last year. This fundraiser is only successful because all the items are baked and donated by our members. Mignon generously contributes all the items needed in the booth and George, her husband, sets up the booth and dismantles it at the close on Sunday. What would we do without them! And a special thanks to all of you that served in the booth.

Mignon and I want to thank all of you who participated, as you know this financial project is necessary for our League to exist and we couldn't do it without you!



Peggy Bartlett and Mignon Theim-Murphy, Hometown Fair Booth Chairs

Nov 4	Tues	7 am to 8 pm	Local Elections		For information on your precinct, go to Smart-Voter.org and type in your address.
Nov 10	Mon	7:15 to 9:30 pm	Board meeting		At home of Irma Cohen, on 1420 Walnut, Manhattan Beach
Nov 15	Sat	9:30 to 2:30 pm	County League Day, on Proposition 13 — 25 Years After		Regency Room, Pickwick Gardens, 1001 Riverside Drive, Burbank (see page 6)
Nov 18	Tues	11:00 to 1:00 pm 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Budget Accountability Act Speaker Training (two sessions)		SEIU Local 660 2724 West 8th St, Los Angeles
Nov 24	Mon	7:00 to 9:00 pm	Study of County Government		Manhattan Beach Library (see pages 1 and 6).
Dec 3	Wed	11:00 to 1:00 pm 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Budget Accountability Act Speaker Training		Hollywood Methodist Church 6817 Franklin Ave, Los Angeles
Dec 6	Sat	10:00 to 1:00 pm	Program Planning for League's national activities		921 Rowell, Manhattan Beach (at home of Ann Martin)
Jan 2	Fri	5 pm	Deadline! for articles to be included in the Jan issue of the <i>Beach Cities Voter</i>		Please submit your articles electronically.
Jan 12	Mon	7:15 to 9:15 pm	Board meeting		2704 Maple, Manhattan Beach (at home of Mignon Theim-Murphy)
Jan 21	Wed	To be announced	Alternative Choice in Education—a brown bag discussion		To be announced
Jan 26	Mon	7:00 to 9:00 pm	Study of Presidential Election system		Contact Maggie to help on this study! Program@beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org .



701 13th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

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Editor@beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org

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