



# ***The Beach Voter***

League of Women Voters Beach Cities  
Serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach & Redondo Beach

## **HOLIDAY LUNCHEON**

**When:** Saturday, December 17, 2011 – 10 AM-1:30 PM

**Where:** Home of Ann Martin  
921 Rowell Avenue, Manhattan Beach

**Bring:** Last Name A – L: Salad  
Last Name M – Z: Hot Dish

Please join us for our annual program planning meeting/holiday luncheon. This is an especially good meeting for newcomers or prospective members. We will review our National Positions, as well as find time to socialize and get to know one another. See the article on page 4 for more details on program planning.

### **JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING – Maggie Wilkinson THE VITALITY CITY PROGRAM –HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?**

At our Membership Meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, our speaker, Francey Marzicola, will lead a discussion on the new Vitality City Program sponsored by the Beach Cities Health District.

In previous meetings, we've learned about the LWVC's positions on Natural Resources and the LWVUS position on climate change. At this meeting, we'll learn about steps that several of our Beach Cities are taking to reduce rates of obesity and hypertension. This not only improves personal health but also lowers our carbon footprint, which affects climate change. For example, some neighborhoods have formed "walking school buses." Other neighborhoods are forming walking groups, such as the Walking Moai, where participants get together regularly and motivate each other to walk. And a new South Bay Bicycle Master Plan has been approved by four of our beach cities.

All members are encouraged to attend this event to learn how you can improve your own health, your community's health, save energy, and reduce your carbon footprint! Guests are welcome too!

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The League affirms our belief in 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 of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

<p>The Beach Voter</p> <p>Co-Presidents: Barbara Arlow Fatima Malik</p> <p>Editor: Ruth Hart</p> <p>Copy Editor: Barbara Arlow</p> <p>Production: Mignon Thiem-Murphy Peggy Bartlett Sunhee Park</p> <p>Labels: Ann Martin</p>
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To become a member: Send check in the amount of \$55.00 (payable to the League of Women Voters Beach Cities) to Susan Grebe at 629 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan Beach CA 90266.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

## **THE RULES HAVE CHANGED**

### **How to Survive Redistricting, the Top 2 Primaries, and More!**

In 2008 and 2010, California voters approved major changes to the way political districts are drawn and to California's primary election process. The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles is sponsoring a hands-on workshop on Saturday, December 10 to help voters understand these new processes and the impact that they will have as we approach the 2012 primary and general elections.

In addition to the prestigious speakers (see enclosed flyer), a computer lab will be available to demonstrate how redistricting may have changed your political jurisdiction(s).

### **LWV BEACH CITIES RESPONDS TO CONSENSUS QUESTIONS – Penny Markey**

In 2011, the National League of Women Voters asked local chapters to discuss and respond to 15 consensus questions that will inform the League as it develops its official position on "Role of Federal Government in Public Education".

On September 27 and October 25, 2011, members of League of Women Voters Beach Cities were joined by representatives from LWV Torrance to share knowledge, thoughts and opinions on the issues identified by the National League. Each of the sessions, which were held in the community room at Manhattan Village Mall, had about 20 members in attendance. The meetings were structured using interactive learning and decision-making techniques to allow the participants to share factual background information and to engage in preliminary discussion before addressing the consensus questions. At the close of discussion, the participants voted and responded to the 15 consensus questions provided by the League. Enthusiasm was high and the discussion was lively. Consensus was not reached on all of the questions. However, Beach Cities' input will be very valuable as it provides the League with the opinions of LWV constituency groups from around the country. These opinions from across the nation will be used to determine the national position on "The Role of Federal Government in Public Education".

The results of the League of Women Voters Beach Cities Consensus vote are contained in an insert to this issue of the Voter.

Many thanks to the members of the Consensus Committee for their ongoing efforts in making the LWV Beach Cities Consensus process a success. Consensus committee chair, Harriet Chase, coordinated the events. Joann Kennelly served as facilitator for each of the sessions. Diane Wallace prepared power point presentations to help the group to focus on the issues. Don Brann provided the group with historical background of the Federal role in education. Jan Nathanson, Margaret Thelen and Penny Markey served as minute takers, timekeepers and scribes. Many thanks go to Jamie Watson, LWVTA, for her assistance in our consensus process.

## **PROGRAM PLANNING, NATIONAL AND COUNTY: ARE YOU READY?**

It is that time of year again, when, in addition to the culinary delights and festivities of the holiday luncheon, we first put on our "thinking caps" and review and discuss programs for the next two years. A challenge this year is to cover both National and County programs. Our suggestions will be forwarded to the boards for their consideration, and the final decisions will be made at the County convention in March and the National convention in June.

We are truly a grass roots organization and this gives us the opportunity to influence what new studies to pursue, what positions need updating or emphasis and which, if any, to drop. Even if legislation has been adopted, we must be vigilant, for circumstances change, thus we rarely drop an item. We are also being asked by LWVUS to describe how the positions have been used in our local communities.

Remember, according to LWVUS instructions, "Program, a three-part process that is a core component of the League's mission, is composed of program planning, study and consensus, and advocacy. It is not essential for every League to select an issue."

Enclosed with this Voter is a summary of the LWVUS positions for your review before the meeting on December 17th. You will be able to "plan ahead" and consider what new issues are urgent for study or how best we can preserve and bring action to the existing positions. We urge all members to attend and join in the planning.

Jan Nathanson  
Program Vice President

## **MEMBERS IN THE NEWS**

**Don Brann** is one of five honorees of the Distinguished Alumni Awards, given to El Camino alumni who have shown outstanding achievement in their chosen career, service to the community or area of endeavor, and have gained local, state, or national recognition for their contributions.

Brann is the former superintendent of the Wiseburn School District in Hawthorne, and attended the district's schools as a youth, beginning a nearly 60-year connection with the District. He moved to Hawthorne with his family in 1953 and attended Normandie Avenue School.

After graduating from Hawthorne High School, Brann became the first in his family to attend college when he enrolled at El Camino College. After graduating from ECC, he went on to earn a bachelor's degree from USC; a master's degree from California State University, Los Angeles; and a doctorate degree from USC. In his 40 years as an educator, he held

numerous teaching and administrative positions, including four superintendent assignments – most recently serving as superintendent of the Wiseburn School District in Hawthorne, where he remained for 15 years.

Brann founded the California Small School Districts Association in 1983, and is vice president of The Cosca Group, an executive search firm placing superintendents across the state. In addition, Brann founded Da Vinci Charter Schools in 2008, the same year he was elected to the El Segundo City Council. Brann teaches a course at Loyola Marymount University titled “The Business of Education,” and works with the LWVBC, most recently as a member of the Education Consensus Committee.

**Carole Wagner Vallianos**, a former LA BioMed board member who also briefly served as the Institute’s interim president and CEO in 2008, has been given an Award for Exceptional Service to the Institute. The award was presented to her during the Board’s annual meeting in June 2011.

Wagner Vallianos, a Manhattan Beach attorney, is a past President of both LWVBC and LWVC. She served two years as the chair of LA BioMed’s Board of Directors and previously was the Board’s Treasurer and chair of the Board’s finance committee. She is a principal in the Law Offices of Carole Wagner Vallianos, where she practices civil rights law, nonprofit corporation law, and estate planning. She is the president-elect of the American Judicature Society, an organization seeking to improve the justice system.

## **LOS ANGELES COUNTY FALL LEAGUE DAY REPORT – Joan Arias**

Speakers gave their perspective on County and State redistricting to a “small but intense” group of League members on Saturday October 22 at the Rio Hondo Event Center in Downey.

**Steve Napolitano** was appointed to the Los Angeles County Boundary Review Committee by Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe. Formerly the Mayor of Manhattan Beach, Napolitano is the field deputy who heads Knabe's Torrance Office. He described his efforts from which, he noted, he “still has scars!” In November, 2010, the Board of Supervisors chose a 10-member committee to look at the population of Los Angeles County. Their goal was to equalize the population, keep the districts “reasonably contiguous,” keeping cities together while considering the Voting Rights Act without diluting “communities of interest” nor solely dividing districts racially. They also had to keep in mind the law that forbade drawing incumbents out of their districts. The exercise presented a number of challenges.

He highlighted the use of modern technology that allowed the group to look at maps based on “what if” questions. Once the maps were submitted, there was extensive discussion in an attempt to balance the populations. For example, in the final mapping, District 4 – Supervisor Knabe’s district - lost 40,000 people who were moved to the 5<sup>th</sup> District during the period of balancing. Napolitano described the political discussions involved among the Supervisors, who came up with a number of plans before finally completing their work in July after hearings and

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“incredible public participation.” The Committee proposed maps on September 27 and after October 27, “anyone who wants to sue can!”

An interesting aspect of the Census results, which guided their work, was that the African-American population in Los Angeles declined while the Latino and Asia/Pacific Islander population grew. This complicated the discussions and the mapping.

When asked about priorities, Napolitano said that they had tried to keep all the guidelines at an equal level of priority when they drew the maps: communities of interest, Voting Rights Act and other guiding principles. They also listened to everyone, according to Napolitano. He described the 4<sup>th</sup> District as being enormously diverse. The District, which includes Marina del Rey, Playa del Rey, El Segundo, Torrance, Beach Cities, Lomita and many other cities (although Westchester recently became part of District 5 during the boundary redefinition), contains a population that speaks 130 different languages and practices 140 different religions!

When asked about the public participation, Napolitano noted that the vast majority wanted to keep things as they were. Stay tuned by checking the web (<http://knabe.com/> is Don Knabe's web site; <http://redistricting.lacounty.gov/index.php/public-access-plan/> is the Los Angeles County redistricting web site).

**Jodie Filkins-Weber**, one of the 14 Commissioners on the State Redistricting Commission, gave us a fascinating perspective on the California State redistricting effort. Ms. Filkins-Weber is a self-employed insurance litigation defense attorney who practices law in Orange County. She defends various insurance companies, adjusting companies, and self-insured employers against claims for workers' compensation benefits and personal injury. One of the Republicans on the Commission, she claimed to have “more scars than Steve Napolitano!” She described how the Committee came about, the lengthy and detailed process of selection that resulted from Proposition 11, which League supported. This ballot measure led to the change from California's prior process of Legislators drawing their own lines to having the lines drawn by a Commission selected for their ability to work across party lines for the benefit of California. She pointed out that although the designers of the process expected only a few applicants to the Commission, the Bureau of State Audits' outreach resulted in 30,000 applicants and a tremendous workload was involved in screening first down to 4500, then to 120 who were finally interviewed and selected down to 60, then the final 36 from which a random drawing selected 8 who then picked the final 6, forming a committee of 14, balanced among 5 Republicans, 5 Democrats and 4 Unaffiliated. For information about the Commission see <http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/commission.html>

Filkins-Weber thanked the League for their emphasis on transparency and openness with no “behind the scenes” machinations and noted that the Commission had operated in an open and transparent manner. They held many public hearings at which they heard from more than 2700 people. Additionally, for the first time, they operated with a California Constitutional definition of “community of interest”:

*A community of interest is a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Examples of such shared interests are those common to an urban area, a rural area, an industrial area, or an agricultural area, and those common to areas in which the people share similar living standards, use the same transportation facilities, have similar work opportunities, or have access to the same media of communication relevant to the election process. Communities of interest shall not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates. (California Constitution, Article XXI, Section 2(d)(4))*

Ms. Filkins-Weber noted that unlike the County Boundary Review Committee, the State Commission had very specific criteria that had to be followed in a specific order:

1. The population of each district should be as equal as possible.
2. The maps needed to comply with the Federal Voting Rights Act, specifically Section 5 (Merced, Monterey, Kings and Yuba Counties are areas which required specific protections for minorities) which applies to counties where there had been past discrimination. This required a federal review. As well, Section 2, which states that if there were a geographically compact area of minorities such that they could elect a representative of their own and if separated out they could not (the example was Watts), this needed to be taken into account. While not all those areas are "Section 2 areas," many are such as the San Gabriel Valley which represents a geographically compact, cohesive area that could elect a representative.
3. Avoid islands, preserve geographic contiguity.
4. Respect the geographic integrity of city boundaries and communities of interest as much as possible. Filkins-Weber noted that this criterion drew the most public participation and the most difficult task was to help the public understand this issue. The Commission was directed to minimize boundary divisions.
5. Encourage geographic compactness where practical (and without violating the first 4 criteria!)
6. Nesting (about which they are currently being sued) should be accomplished where possible. This refers to combining 2 Assembly districts to create one Senate district. The Commission settled on a "blended nesting."
7. The Commission could not consider the residency of incumbents! Unlike the County redefinitions which had to take incumbents' residency into consideration, the State Redistricting Commission was specifically forbidden to do so and many have changed!

The Commission tried to balance priorities but in many cases there were conflicting communities of interest, which led to intense discussion at the sessions. The Commission issued draft maps on June 10 and on August 15 they held the final vote. The maps are now final but subject to challenge. The Commission is being challenged on several districts, both Senatorial and Congressional. For information about the efforts, go to the California Supreme Court web site at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/supremecourt.htm>

Ms. Filkins-Weber is a Commissioner for 10 years and can not run for office during those 10 years nor is she eligible to serve at any level for 5 years. She recommended everyone go to <http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/> and go to the maps section.

<b>CALENDAR</b>			
Date	Time	Subject	Place
Saturday December 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am – 1:30 pm	The Rules Have Changed – LWV of Los Angeles	UTLA Auditorium 3303 Wilshire Blvd Los Angeles
Saturday December 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am – 1:30 pm	Holiday Brunch	Home of Ann Martin 921 Rowell Avenue Manhattan Beach
Tuesday January 10 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Penny Markey 1534 Ruhland Avenue Manhattan Beach
Tuesday January 24 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm – 9:00 pm	Membership Meeting	Manhattan Beach Library 1320 Highland Avenue Manhattan Beach
Saturday January 28 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	County Winter League Day – Initiative and Referendum	Taix Restaurant



**League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities**  
**629 19<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Manhattan Beach, CA 90266**