

# The *Voter*

Winter 2014

## Upcoming Events

**Sustainable City Plan** The January 16 Units meeting will be on Claremont's updated Sustainable City Plan which was adopted by the City Council on October 8. (it's posted on the City's web site, [www.ci.claremont.ca.us](http://www.ci.claremont.ca.us), under Quick Links). There is also a proposal to establish a "bricks and mortar" Center for Resources and Innovation to bring the community together in implementing the Plan,

and to look toward a sustainable future in times of increasing temperatures, potential water shortages, and population growth. Mayor Pro-Tem Joe Lyons, City Sustainability Coordinator Chris Veirs, and Sustainable Claremont Co-Chair Freeman Allen will present and participate in the discussion to follow. We hope you can join in the discussion from 9:30 to 11 at Mt. San Antonio Gardens. There will be no evening units in January.

### LWV of LA County Hosts a Panel Discussion *The Affordable Care Act: Where are we now?*

The ongoing implementation of the Affordable Care Act will be discussed by a panel of experts from Covered California and the Los Angeles County and Long Beach Health Departments. (See flyer in this issue.)



Saturday, January 25, 2014  
9:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Lakewood Country Club  
3101 Carson Street, Lakewood 90712



Luncheon Buffet - \$30  
(Vegetarian choices available)

Reservations needed by January 11, 2014. If you're interested in carpooling (riding or driving), call the office. Let's be well represented.

### *Save the Date:* February 8, 2014.

You won't want to miss the latest in our **Food for Thought** Series.  
Mark your calendar and watch for details about our 2 pm program.

### Help Wanted - - Outstanding Opportunity

LWVUS national study on agriculture (our February Unit) is challenging, interesting, educational, and important. League members extol the benefits derived from participation in past studies. Here is a chance to have a memorable experience while making an important contribution to League. Join the study committee. Help make sense of a complex topic and share what you learn with others. Volunteer. Challenge yourself. Contribute. Call the office and get involved.

## Co-Presidents' Message

Even though it was an “off-year” election cycle, Claremont’s interest was piqued by five candidates vying for three positions on the Claremont Unified School Board. Voter Service Chair, Cindy Reul, expertly organized and executed a Candidates’ Forum at Hughes Community Center on the evening of October 23, 2013. With the room nearly filled to capacity, the candidates had an opportunity to express their views on education and the role of a school board member in the governance of the district, prior to the vote on November 5. We are proud to learn that Dave Nemer, a long-time League member campaigning for one the open seats, was elected. Congratulations to him, Nancy Osgood (another new board member) and to Steve Llanusa (who was re-elected/

There is more good news! The City of Claremont is moving forward in its effort to take control of its water rates. On Wednesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, Freeman Allen, who is not only a League member but a member of Sustainable Claremont, spoke before the city council in favor of the acquisition. Council Members lauded his supportive statements and the research Marilee and Freeman have presented on water resources. Marilee Scaff and Ellen Taylor attended the meeting as well, speaking affirmatively about the direction the city is

taking in regard to acquisition of Golden State Water Co., acting in accordance with the LWV Claremont’s local Water Position adopted in 2006, that states in part: “Support for public ownership of water rights and utilities as vital public resources to ensure that public goals and purposes are reflected in policies and rates...” Ellen Taylor was later interviewed by a CBS affiliate and a small snippet appeared on television.

Thanks to all the members and friends for dropping by our booth at Village Venture on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October. It was a beautiful day and a great opportunity to talk with you and others wanting to know more about the League. An organization whose members wear welcoming, smiling faces when a stranger approaches may have a new member tomorrow! Thank you for your dedication, your time and those faces!

On Sunday December 8, the Claremont League held its annual Holiday Party from 2:00pm-4:00pm at Garner House. Presenting Ginger Elliot the 2013 Ordway Award (see below) was a highlight of the event.

In recognition of a busy holiday season, LWV was relatively inactive until now.

*Ruth Currie and Jerry Klasik*

### GINGER ELLIOTT NAMED 2013 ORDWAY AWARD RECIPIENT

*Each year Claremont Area LWV honors a community member who has performed outstanding community service with its Ruth Ordway Award. Usually this happens in June, at our Annual Meeting. Or, if the recipient is not able to attend at that time, we postpone the Award presentation until the Opening Meeting in September. Occasionally, the recipient is also not available for the September meeting – which happened this year. To the great relief of the 2013 Ordway Award Committee (Freeman Allen, Betsey Coffman, and Judith Tanenbaum), Ginger Elliott was able to join us at our Christmas party on Saturday, December 7, and Judith was able to read the following citation and present her with the award.*

*We try to keep the identity of the Award recipient a secret until the presentation; we were delighted this year when Ginger seemed so surprised – six months is a long time to keep a secret. We thank her daughter, Christine, for arranging Ginger’s presence and helping with the prose that Judith used:*

Each year the Claremont Area League presents the Ordway Award to a citizen who has given outstanding service to the community. The award is given in the memory of Ruth Ordway, a founding member of our local League who served twice as its President. Ruth



was a leader in establishing the Claremont Intercultural Council, which was active in developing housing, health-care, and student financial aid in Claremont’s Mexican-American community. After her death in 1982, her friends and family established the Ordway

Award, which is presented annually to a person who has gone “above and beyond” in giving to her or his community.

This year’s recipient is a Boston area native, who attended local parochial schools, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Regis College and a Master’s degree from Boston College. She married a fellow Boston College scholar and moved to Michigan where she worked at the University Counseling Office while her husband completed his PhD. Then off to Claremont, where he became a professor at Cal Poly Pomona, and she multi-tasked – being a mother to her daughter, working at the University of La Verne Law School and later in the admissions office at Pomona College. Not long after coming to Claremont she joined our local League and was soon recruited to be on the Board of Directors, chairing at various times “Units”, Observers, and Membership, as well as serving on the Budget Committee and many Auction Committees.

But, perhaps our honoree is best known in this community as Executive Director of *Claremont Heritage*. Ginger Elliott served in this position for over 25 years, providing assistance to homeowners about renovations, meeting and consulting with City planning staff, attending multiple commission meetings and City Council meetings on a bimonthly basis, and advocating

for responsible restoration and preservation of a diverse array of structures in Claremont – including the old High School, the Depot, Padua Hills Theater, and more recently the Packing House. Plaques in our city parks owe their existence to Ginger’s efforts. Even after retirement, Ginger leads monthly walking tours of the Village and the Claremont Colleges, and continues to give bus tours and Claremont history lessons for Claremont’s third grade students.

Ginger served as “team mom” to nearly a dozen soccer teams, was a member of the PTA at Condit, El Roble and the High School, and was very involved in the CHS Aquatics program -- helping with fundraising and other events for the Swim Team. She served on the Board of Directors at Mount San Antonio Gardens and currently serves on the Board of Pilgrim Place. She is also currently involved with the Safe and Healthy Housing Committee, assisting in monitoring Claremont apartment complexes to promote quality of life improvement and reduce crime in Claremont’s multi-family complexes.

Ginger has been involved in many aspects of Claremont life and continues to actively participate in many ways. Claremont is a better place with her in it, and we are delighted to honor her dedication to this community with the Ruth Ordway Award.

## CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Public education has historically been a topic of interest to the League of Women Voters, and our local LWV November Unit/Discussion meeting dealt with some current education issues. In 2010, the National Governor’s Association joined with two associations of leaders in American education to form the Common Core Standards Initiative group. The effort came about partly because of the “No Child Left Behind” requirement that all public school children become “proficient” in reading and math by 2014. The discrepancies from state to state in what was called “proficiency” were notable, since each state had its own curriculum, standards, and tests. The Standards Initiative group worked with teachers, school administrators, scholars, and the public in developing standards for U.S. public schools. Forty-eight states have now adopted these Common Core Standards, and they are being instituted in California in the current school year. Two coalitions have received federal aid to develop assessment systems aligned to the Common Core Standards. According to the Standards Initiative group, the “standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers figure out the knowledge and skills their students should have”. Handouts were available at the meeting showing some examples of these Standards for elementary level reading and math.

Another new development in California public education is the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), passed by the Legislature in 2013. Under this law, most categorical aid (funds earmarked for specific programs) will be eliminated. (However, Special Education, the After School Education and Safety program, and child nutrition programs will still be funded.) School Districts will receive a “base grant” per student, plus a “supplemental grant” for the unduplicated number of English language learners and economically-disadvantaged students, plus a “concentration grant” for the unduplicated number of English language learners and economically-disadvantaged students above 50% of the School District enrollment. The latter two grants are designed to provide extra funding for educating “high needs children” – children who are not English speakers and children from low-income homes. The law includes requirements for parent involvement and a new parent advisory committee.

Additional issues discussed were problems associated with “high stakes testing” and inclusion of student test results in teacher evaluations. Presenters were Betsey Coffman, Dave Nemer, and Arlene Andrew. Dave shared with us his experiences while running for CUSD board.

*Betsey Coffman*

## CLAREMONT'S WATER FUTURE

Should Claremont buy its water system and have local control over our water deliveries and rates? The Claremont League of Women Voters has advocated City ownership since 1940. Why? Most of our neighboring cities own their own water companies and their rates are lower than ours. La Verne, for example, has owned their water company since the 1920s. A comparison of their rates and their operating system with Claremont's is quite informative.

Why the difference? There are several reasons: in 1999 Golden State (at that time "Southern California Water") initiated legal proceedings to 'adjudicate' the Six Basins Aquifer that supplies Claremont's well water and was allowed to pump 34.7% of the "safe yield" of water from the aquifer. Also, that same year, Golden State received from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) the right to establish regional rates.

City-owned water companies, such as the one in La Verne, set their own water rates, but rates for private utilities must be approved by the CPUC. GSW is now a wholly owned subsidiary of American States Water Company and sells water to a number of cities in the Southland. GSW, with CPUC approval, established a regional rate structure that includes Claremont, so local rates are no longer based on local costs, but rather reflect costs and charges across a "Region 3" that includes cities from the coastal area to the desert. This regional system under GSW does not work to Claremont's advantage. For example, the water usage rates in Claremont have more than doubled over five years, while the rates in La Verne rose less than 25%. Water bills in La Verne, for the typical water user, are now about \$50 per month lower than in Claremont for the same amount of water usage, although La Verne is similar to Claremont in population, location, water quality, service, and the sources of water. (Actually, one might expect La Verne rates to be higher, not lower, since they have less access to inexpensive local well water.)

GSW encourages customers to conserve water. But, with the approval of the CPUC, GSW is assured profits for water they don't sell! As water is conserved, the cost of water is increased for everyone through a "Water Rate Adjustment Mechanism" (WRAM) that increases usage rates on every water bill. The CLAREMONT OUTRAGE campaign, advocating local control, is a community response to these high rates. Responding in part to this outrage, the Claremont City Council met in closed session on January 10, 2012, to begin discussions on taking over the water system. Subsequently they voted unanimously to approve a study of potential acquisition and entered into negotiations with GSW. The results were presented at a Town Hall meeting (see below).

The cost of acquisition and whether Claremont can afford it are major questions of concern. The system was recently appraised at \$55 million by a state-approved appraiser, but GSW contends that valuation is too low, and they will not be a willing seller. GSW piles on all the costs they can, ignores potential savings, then tells the City it cannot afford to buy the system without increasing taxes and water rates. The fact is, they have proven that Claremont cannot afford not to buy the system. In comparison with La Verne, considering differences in water bills and financial benefits to the city, Claremont and its water users now pay about \$8 million more each year than they would under a city-owned system. If that amount were used instead to purchase the system, it could buy a 30-year revenue bond worth well over \$55 million.

While water rates are important, in the long run local control of this vital resource is critical. Claremont faces possible disruption of water supplies from Northern California, likely water shortages with drought and climate change, and increased demand with projected population growth. Water is a resource we cannot do without. There is no substitute. It is important that Claremont have local control to be able to plan effectively for its future water needs and respond to challenges in ways that put the public good first.

*Freeman Allen and Marilee Scuff*

## THE DECISION ON WATER

At the November 6 Town Hall meeting at Taylor Hall, City Council members voted unanimously to take the next step in the potential acquisition of Golden State Water Company's Claremont assets, possibly through eminent domain proceedings. With the vote the council directed staff to prepare a California Environmental Quality Act review and other necessary financial and legal documents, and appropriated \$350,000 for the

process. Potentially acquiring the system through eminent domain would require adoption of certain findings by a 4/5 vote from the council and filing an eminent domain lawsuit. Preparation for the filing is expected to take about six months. The eminent domain proceedings could take years, with a jury eventually determining the fair value of the system. But there is an option for the city to buy the system early-on, knowing

they might have to pay a different price when the jury acts. In Felton, a California city that went through the eminent domain process, their water company settled just before the case went to the jury.

An appraisal commissioned by the City found the fair value of the system to be \$55 million, based on revenues to Golden State Water Company under the current regional water rates. The Company claims the actual value is much greater (but the appraiser determined the fair value to be only \$34 million under a local water rate structure).

Council members offered a variety of reasons for proceeding. Joe Lyons believes local control will be a source of security long-term, and best serve our interests: water is a key component of Claremont's Sustainable City Plan. He anticipates a vigorous newspaper and mailing campaign, and urges readers to consider the source and the motives of the authors. Larry Schroeder noted that water supply and cost considerations are complicated – and we can find the necessary expertise. He, too, advocates local control. Sam Pedroza sees the referendum to be on the way. Golden State Water has insulted our intelligence, outrageous rates, being stuck under a company that is not serving our best interests under a broken Public

Utilities Commission system. It has to do with vision: Claremont 30 years from now, about local control, fairness, and transparency. Corey Calaycay believes in citizen-driven policy: the community expressed concerns about rates and property values, ongoing themes with cries becoming louder. The present process is like taxation without representation, a dysfunctional system where a non-elected body guarantees profits and a WRAM system that is not free enterprise. Opanyi Nasiali noted that the City has taken the time to make a decision based on well researched information that will be available to all. A private company in an open market system must look at what the public thinks. Under the PUC system, Golden State Water could care less about the public. Will rates go down? Not immediately. It's like taking on a home mortgage. There is risk – a managed risk -- but so is there in driving on the freeway, and that doesn't stop us.

As a member of the public commented, there will be no lack of water, even if our present sources fail: there is the ocean, gray water, black water. The question is, how to make it safe and drinkable. It is much better to have that decision in our hands.

*Freeman Allen*

## In Memoriam

Marian Toovey died October 29, 2013, after months of failing health due to liver cancer. Marian's membership and participation in our local League reflected her great interest in government, American history, and public policy. A memorial service was held on January 5 at the dA Gallery in Pomona.

Our sympathies are with Jerry Klasik (one of our co-presidents) on the loss of her father.

**Food Reduction:** A draft Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report was leaked recently (NY Times, 11/2/13). The leaked report suggests that global warming may result in a 2% reduction in food production per decade in the future. At the same time, demand for food is expected to rise by 14% as population grows from 7.2 billion people to 9.6 billion people. This additional demand might be met by putting more land into food production. However, this would require the clearing of additional forested land, which would reduce the amount of forest available for carbon

sequestration. Clearly policy makers around the globe face difficult decisions in the future. For more on the IPCC, go to <http://ipcc.ch/>.

*Jack Sullivan*

Beautiful planet  
Ideal home for two billion  
Nine billion? Look out!

Self-healing planet  
So many are polluting  
Earth now overwhelmed

## Diversity in Los Angeles County

*A Community of Contrasts*, a new publication from Asian Americans Advancing Justice, is a treasure trove for anyone who likes data, graphs, and charts, for anyone interested in challenging stereotypes or preconceptions, or just for those interested in learning things they don't already know. Those involved in the "Population Impacts on a Sustainable Future" county study a couple of decades ago already know that LA County has no majority population, but the actual diversity and recent variable growth rates are enlightening, and the details intriguing.

More Asian Americans live in LA County than in any other county in the country, nearly 1.5 million from more than 45 ethnic groups, speaking 28 different languages. The county's Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Korean, Sri Lanka, Taiwanese, and Thai American populations are larger than those in any other place in the country.

As the report says, "Many see our communities as a monolithic whole, consistently among the most well educated and successful. This perception masks tremendous social and economic diversity." It then goes on to specify what some of the differences, contrasts, and similarities are. It looks at education, income, health, housing, immigration, population size and growth, language, and voter behavior.

Chinese Americans (the largest ethnic group at almost 404 thousand) make up more than a quarter of the county's Asian-American population with Filipinos (at over 374 thousand) not far behind. Those groups continued to grow between the 2000 census and the 2010 census, by 21% and 26%, respectively, but their growth rates are far from the largest; Bagladeshi grew at a 122% rate. The total population of the county grew at only 3% between the last counts. Chinese Americans maintained their position at 27% of the Asian-American population in the county, while the Filipino segment went from 24% to 25%.

Because of the recent typhoon in the Philippines, looking at some additional characteristics of the Filipino ethnic group seems timely. Only 18% of Filipinos are categorized as low income, tying with Japanese as the lowest of the Asian-American groups. (Tongans, at 78%, are highest.) At only 5%, Filipinos have the fewest below the poverty line, with Japanese second at 8%. Filipino per capita income at \$27,487 is just above the figure for the total population, \$27,344. Indians have the highest at \$39,433 with Japanese next at

\$36,070. Tongans are lowest at \$8,146, Cambodians next lowest at \$14,276.

Between 2007 and 2011 unemployment in LA County increased 78% overall, 89% for Asian Americans, but 118% for Filipinos. As the report notes, "Nearly 31% of Filipinos ... work in the health care and social assistance industry; no other racial or ethnic group countywide is as concentrated in an industry. ... Additionally, Asian Americans make up the largest proportion of registered nurses in Los Angeles County (42%)."

While 76% of the total population of adults 25 or older hold a high school diploma or have received their GED, 94% of Filipinos have done so, second only to Japanese at 95%. In the population as a whole, 29% have at least a bachelor's degree; for Filipinos, it is 54% and for Japanese, 47%.

Nearly 930 thousand Asian Americans living in LA County are immigrants; 63% of Filipinos in the county are foreign-born. Between 2000 and 2010, more Asian Americans settled in the county as legal permanent residents than in any other county in California, with the largest number, 84,659, coming from the Philippines. (As the report points out, "There are no official estimates of the number of undocumented Asian-Americans immigrants in Los Angeles County. However, ... there could be [at] least 130,000 undocumented Asian Americans living in Los Angeles County.")

In 2000, there were seven Los Angeles County cities with majority Asian-American populations. By 2010, there were 13, all but one (Cerritos) in the San Gabriel Valley. Monterrey Park at 68% has the highest percentage. The city of Los Angeles has the highest *number* of Asian Americans, both in LA County and in the entire state, but their percentage of the city's population is only 13%; it grew 19% between 2000 and 2010, from 11% in 2000.

The report includes information on voting patterns and on health and health care that also merits attention; watch for it in a future Voter.

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Creatures great and small  
Challenge human selfishness  
Please share our planet

# Working to Protect the Vote

(extracts from an LWVUS blog by Tim O'Brien 12/19/2013)

The League is taking a multi-pronged approach to combat the harmful effects of the Supreme Court's decision on the Voting Rights Act (VRA), the law that prevented widespread discrimination in voting for nearly 50 years. The Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), effectively gutting the federal "preclearance" mechanism that had protected millions of voters by preventing discrimination in voting for more than four decades, opening the floodgates for state legislatures to put in place barriers to voting in the jurisdictions with the worst records of discrimination. allowing changes to election laws and practices at the state and local levels with little recourse until after harm is done in an election.

Beyond this concern, the League is pushing for urgently needed reforms to our outdated election system in order to address low voter turnout and the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities and low income individuals at the polls. In the wake of the positive Supreme Court decision upholding the integrity of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), League advocates will continue to urge state leaders to fully comply with the federal requirements set forth in the NVRA, often called the "motor voter" act. The law made it easier for Americans to register to vote by requiring states to provide voter registration opportunities when citizens obtain a driver's license or seek services at other government agencies, as well as through mail-in registration. Leagues are working to inform public assistance agencies of their obligation to provide voter registration opportunities to individuals, guiding agencies and elections officials so that their registration work is as effective as possible and legal action is taken when necessary.

In 2014 we can expect continued battles against voting restrictions in Alaska, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. In addition to these threats, we know we will see voter photo ID laws implemented in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Virginia, and there is no doubt that other states will be added to this mix in 2014 as the political landscapes change before and after the mid-term elections.

While the League will be busy protecting the right to vote, we're also committed to reforming our elections in order to better serve voters. The League has identified five proactive elections administration reform priorities that the League will work to implement:

1. Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration
2. Improved Polling Place Management
3. Expanded Early Voting
4. Secure Online Voter Registration
5. Electronic Streamlining of Election Practices

We are hopeful that we will see some positive reforms in 2014. Specifically, we think we might see advances in secure online voter registration in Florida, Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania; automatic voter registration in Oregon; electronic streamlining in Minnesota; and the expansion of early voting in New Jersey.

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Cheer redistricting  
Reject gerrymandering  
Trust democracy



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**Winter 2014**

Return Service Requested

Date	Type	Location	Time	Topic	Organizers	Notes
Jan 16 (Thursday)	Unit discussion	MSAG	9:30 am	Sustainability Plan Update	Allen, Veirs, Lyon	
Jan. 25 (Saturday)	County league day	Lakewood Country Club	9:30-1:00	The Affordable Care Act	Los Angeles County League	Buffet Lunch - \$30 Reserve by Jan. 11
Feb 8 (Saturday)	<i>Food for Thought</i>	Padua Hills Theater	2 pm	TBA	Fundraising Committee	
Feb 3 (Monday)	Sustainability Dialogue	Hahn Building Pomona Campus	7 pm	Making Homes Sustainable Speaker: Michael Shea	Sustainable Claremont	
Feb 20 (Thursday)	Unit discussion	MSAG	9:30 am	National study: Agriculture		
March 3 (Monday)	Sustainability Dialogue	Hahn Building Pomona Campus	7 pm	Andrew Guzman: Human Costs of Climate Change	Sustainable Claremont	
March 29 (Saturday)	LWVLAC Convention	TBA	Morning	County League Annual Convention	LWV of LA County	Watch for additional information