

# The *Voter*

March/April 2013

## Senate Bill (SB) 52, the California Disclose Act

State Senators Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) and Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo) have introduced Senate Bill 52, the California DISCLOSE Act (Democracy Is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections).

A 2012 version of the bill, AB 1648, passed in the Assembly in August, but the Legislative session ran out of time before the Senate acted on it. The bill would require the top three funders of political campaign ads to be clearly identified in the ads themselves and on the campaigns' websites.

The requirements apply to

- \* ballot measure campaigns,
- \* independent political expenditures for or against candidates (e.g., those by independent Political Action Committees or PACS), and
- \* issue advocacy (a tactic used by supporters of a candidate associated with a specific issue to clandestinely advocate for the candidate).

The requirements specify listings of the top three funders and links to their websites. The funders will need to be listed as actual individual, corporate, or union contributors, and not sham nonprofits or misleading committee names. Current fine-print, hard-to-read bottom of the screen disclosures must be replaced with full screen listings.

The California Clean Money Campaign is sponsoring the campaign for gaining passage of SB 52. This non-profit was active in supporting the previous DISCLOSE bill, and also has been and continues to be a strong supporter of public financing for political candidates. The California Clean Money Campaign held an organizing meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> for SB52. The California LWV continues to support the full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures for both candidates and advocates of ballot measures.

**BC**

## A Bid for Support in Haiku

Open letter to  
All Claremont Area League  
Members, supporters

Democracy needs  
Us to be active, involved,  
Informed, and voting

Nonpartisan voice  
Men, women, voters, in League  
Our community

We share deep concerns  
About our world, our children,  
Justice and freedom

We stretch our dollars  
Depend on sweat equity  
As much as we can

Nonetheless we need  
Money to cover our costs  
As we work for good

Your support lets us  
Reach out to inform voters  
Share information

We appreciate  
Your gifts of time and talent  
And your membership

Additional gifts  
New members and suggestions  
Always most welcome

If you believe in  
League's educational aims  
Please help support us



## Co-President's Message

Early in February, we got together up at Padua for the first in our "food for thought" series, as some have started calling it, to hear Professor Ed Haley share some lessons from the past that can help us better understand the present and be less surprised by what may come. The intensity of the attention he received made it clear how well received and much appreciated his words were. An abundance of thoughtful questions reinforced our assessment that this was a most successful afternoon.

Noting that politically our house is as divided as it was in Lincoln's time, Professor Haley recommended we look at our international involvements in terms of what we are and are not good at. When we have played to our strengths, things have worked out well. Reminding us of our contribution to rebuilding Europe and Japan after WW II, Professor Haley said the \$13 billion we gave Europe would translate into about \$100 billion in today's dollars. Churchill called our Marshall Plan the most unselfish act by any nation in history. Ed Haley pointed out that it could also be viewed as enlightened self-interest; broken economies are not good trading partners.

Professor Haley reminded us that those we helped so successfully were homogeneous societies; mature, modern states, well past their industrial revolutions; and, in most cases, with a wealth of non-governmental organizations already in existence. Subsequent interventions that have been far less effective have contrasted with these characteristics. In addition, oppression and corruption are often strong elements of situations we hope to impact in today's world. Not recognizing these differences may have helped us to be unrealistically optimistic about what we can accomplish.

## Missing Silverware??

You may or may not know that our League owns its own silverware, purchased several presidents ago for use at our then-annual dinners, a cost-saving move that has paid off not only in funds but in more environmentally sensitive and classier looking events (no plastic spoons for us). After an event, we divide up the silverware and take it home to wash. Then we sort it at the office and get it ready for the next use.

Over the years we have built up quite a collection of extra pieces that do not match any of our three different patterns, pieces brought in by members for use at an event and not taken home again. We may have some spoons, forks, knives that belong in your collection, not in ours. How to get it home again? We are thinking of having a display of such items at our annual meeting, hoping to reunite the

Professor Haley also reminded us that it is impossible to predict the future. Often we look but do not see. By the time we recognize what we are looking at, the tsunami is overtaking us.

For those who missed this thought-provoking presentation – to say nothing of the beautiful, delicious international desserts – find someone who was there and chat about the meeting. I hope it will convince you to watch for the next one and be sure you are there.

Early in March, there was another meeting well worth attending: Professor Monty Hempel showed his film, ***Sustainability: Changing the Operating System***, as part of the Sustainability Dialog series. It stresses the integration of environmental, economic, and social factors necessary to create sustainable communities and encourages us to face today's challenges and recognize the necessity of acting wisely and quickly. The next dialog will feature Marilyn Hempel discussing ***Overshoot! The Fierce Urgency of NOW***. That's April 8, 2013, at 7 pm at the Hahn Building – easy to get to, right on Harvard Avenue. Put it on your calendar.

A tidbit I found interesting and wanted to share: A museum in China has on display one of the solar panels that Jimmy Carter had placed on the White House in 1979 and that Ronald Reagan had removed in 1985. That reminded me of a Scientific American article (in the early 1970's?) that listed a dozen actions we could take in case global warming was real; it suggested we should go ahead with them, since they would all be positive changes, whether or not needed because of the climate. Too bad we didn't listen. **SAS**

wayward items with their owners...or at least with like-patterned comrades.

If you can think of another approach, please let us know. It seems wasteful/lazy/wrong to let this displacement continue. Unless we come up with another plan, please come to annual meeting prepared to find appropriate homes for some orphaned silverware.

Cheers...**SAS**



## Independent Voter Registration Drives at Risk League of Women Voters Calls on Supreme Court to Uphold Voters' Rights

On Monday, March 18, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in a critical voting rights case, *Arizona v. Inner Tribal Council, Inc.* The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has submitted an amicus brief and the League of Women Voters of Arizona is a plaintiff in the case. The case will decide whether the landmark National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) prevents states from passing laws that restrict the voter registration process.

As the grassroots organization that led the push for enactment of the 1993 NVRA in order to streamline the confusing state-by-state matrix of voter registration laws, the League is deeply concerned that this case could reverse years of progress. LWVUS warns, "This case puts citizen-led voter registration drives like those conducted by the League squarely in the crosshairs of those that want to restrict access to political participation and voting. This is a dressed-up attack on the efforts of the League and our community partners who work year-round to engage and empower voters who would otherwise be left out on Election Day."

"Restricting voter registration is just one more way to limit Americans' right to vote," said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the LWVUS. "States should not be allowed to play politics with the voter registration process, and we

urge the Supreme Court to uphold the important protections that the NVRA provides."

The state of Arizona is looking to limit voter registration by mail by requiring every new registrant to provide documentary proof of citizenship, even though the NVRA currently provides safeguards to prevent non-citizens from registering to vote and has effectively barred states from adding additional requirements. The streamlined mail-in registration form is an essential element for independent voter registration drives and is widely used by groups like the League. The federal Election Assistance Commission has repeatedly held that Arizona's restrictions are not consistent with the NVRA.

"This case could put us on a slippery slope toward more and more restrictions on our right to register and have our vote counted. A green light from the Court will open the door for state legislatures to play politics with America's voter registration process. We want our partners and voters to know that the League stands with them against this threat," concluded McNamara.

The League of Women Voters has worked for 93 years to encourage active and informed participation in government, increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

## Voter Turnout – What Does It Tell Us?

March 5 was election day. Los Angeles was trying to choose a mayor, a city attorney, a controller, and council members in eight of their fifteen districts. Five of the eight city council races were decided, but the other ones go on to runoffs in May. Only 16.11% of the more than 1.8 million registered in the city went to the polls to help make the decisions, despite millions spent on TV and other ads and other forms of electioneering. Think of the impact instant runoff voting could have had.

In Claremont, we had a City Council election, with three people running for two seats. Our turnout was hardly impressive, but at 18.2% it outdoes Los Angeles; and the fact that it was a contested election increased interest and was good for the process

San Dimas reelected their mayor, returned two council members to their seats, and voted to approve an increase in the local bed tax, from 8% to 12%. (The average rate in Los Angeles County is 10.7%.) The increase passed with 56% of the vote, but voter turnout was only 12.26%, hardly impressive.

In California's 32nd Senate District, six candidates were running to fill out the term vacated by Gloria Negrete McLeod. Two counties are involved, Los Angeles and San Bernardino, with about four times as many of the registered voters in SB County as in LA County. Norma Torres received a plurality of the votes in both areas (just under 42% of the 28,542 votes in SB County; just over 57% of 5,634 votes in LA County) and Paul Leon was runner up in both (almost 28% in SB; just under 20% in LA). There will be a runoff in May to decide who will fill the state Senate seat and serve until November 2014.

Voter fatigue? Voter apathy? I am reminded of the comment a Claremont High School student made to me after she had attended a local LWV meeting a few years ago to fulfill a social studies requirement. She said, in some amazement, that she had known before the meeting that we voted for president, but she had not realized we could vote for anything else. So, voter lack of awareness? Why aren't more of us voting?

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Balancing the Federal Budget

Thanks to the Friends of the Library and their ongoing books sales, I recently (finally) became acquainted with this 2003 book, *Balancing the Federal Budget*, based on extensive research and interviews by Irene S. Rubin, currently Emeritus Professor of Public Administration at the Northern Illinois University. As James Savage explains in the cover blurb, “Irene Rubin focuses her attention on how government tried and eventually succeeded in balancing the U.S. federal budget in 1998....Rubin describes the successive efforts of Congress and the administration over seventeen years to shape a process that would encourage balance. The story of the damage done to agencies as they dealt with reductions and how long it took to recover is told here for the first time...”

Ten years have passed since the book’s publication; we are once again in a time of budget deficits. The surplus has disappeared. Our current economic situation makes the book particularly interesting and relevant, in my view. The early paragraphs of her *Chapter 1, 1981-98: Balancing the Budget: What Have We Learned?* suggest what lessons, we may not yet have learned.

*DEFICITS WERE A CHARACTERISTIC of U.S. budgeting for many years. As long as they were moderate in size, they caused no particular alarm or embarrassment, but major tax breaks, a deep recession, and a defense buildup in the early 1980s contributed to an embarrassing increase in the size of the federal deficit. By 1993 outgoing president George Bush issued a budget projection indicating that there would be a deficit of \$327 billion that year, and he predicted that the deficit would be markedly higher near the end of the century. Huge deficits constrained budgeting, locking in old priorities and crowding out genuine choice. By the end of the fiscal year 1998 President Clinton announced a budget surplus and it looked as if surpluses would continue for some time.*

*This book analyses 17 years of efforts to balance the federal budget, from the early Reagan presidency in 1981 to the surplus budgets beginning in 1998. When appropriate to describe ongoing adaptations, the study is extended to 2000. Was balance achieved as a result of intentional efforts on the part of government officials who learned from trial and error how to regain budget balance? The historical record suggests that learning did take place but provides only hints about what may have been learned by whom. It was not immediately clear whether the federal government learned to set priorities or to make meaningful*

*tradeoffs. The government curtailed growth in spending, but to what extent did it “eat the seed corn,” that is, consume its capital, in terms of knowledge, skills, and programs, or “trim the herds,” that is, cut back the deer population to what the land would bear, or, less metaphorically, reduce programs to a sustainable level, given the negotiated size of government and level of taxation? Cutback does not necessarily lead to better and more responsive government at lower costs; it may result in worse management and less responsive government at higher costs.*

...

*The analysis takes place in the context of one overarching story. The president and Congress tried a number of times to balance the budget between 1981 and 1998, with some dramatic failures and, finally, with increasing success. Success was due in part to a long-term, booming economy that produced unexpected revenue, but it was also due to tax increases and to staffing and budget reductions. The budget process itself was changed several times in an effort to find a formula that would strengthen discipline. The changes in the budget process helped to bring about balance.*

Commenting on the mid-90s turnaround, Rubin notes that “Getting to zero became politically feasible after a major tax increase combined with continuing spending discipline. But zero was not everyone’s target. It was popular with the public but not with those who had been using the elimination of the deficit as a way of reducing public spending and the scope of governmental activities. For them, zero deficit would be a kind of stopping point when what they wanted was to keep going.”

Discussing why the budget should be balanced, Rubin notes that “The goal of a balanced budget is fundamentally a political one not an economic or technical one....As one interviewee explained, there was no clear economic justification for why the deficit had to be brought down: ‘We [at OMB] used to say we had to bring down the deficit because it caused inflation...but then there was little inflation and there were still high deficits, so the argument faltered. We don’t say that anymore. It’s all political.’... That balancing the budget is a political goal rather than a technical problem best undertaken by economists is underscored by the fact that economists have not agreed on the importance of deficits or on the nature of their impacts on the economy, and they have also changed their arguments over time, as one or another claim has proven incorrect. ‘The problem of the deficit is the plight of politic and polity. The numbers don’t drive this; politics are behind it. Party politics in this case. It is also bound up

by interest group politics, unions, corporations, and ads to manipulate public opinion.”

Rubin also observed a deterioration in learning in the mid-1990s, and a decrease in comity, as ideology increased: “Ideologues ‘don’t have policy wonks on their staff; they hire press relations instead. Not people who can help them think analytically.’”

The beginning of Rubin’s *Chapter 2, What Happened and What Was Learned* summarizes the story and introduces the concept of sequestration, new to me until recently. (As you read this, remember it was published ten years ago.)

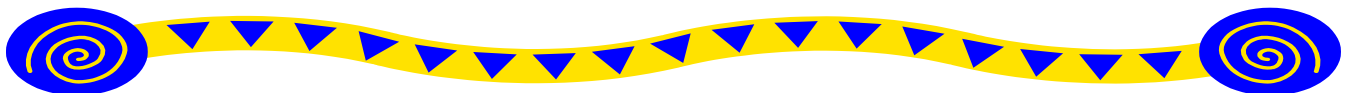
*FROM 1979 ONWARD, deficits began to grow, seemingly uncontrollably. Awareness of deficits and various responses to them, both symbolic and real, began in 1981, during the early Reagan administration, although some participants start the story earlier or later...(B)riefly, during the first year of the Reagan administration, major spending cuts (called Gramm-Latta after their legislative sponsors) and a huge tax reduction (Economic Recovery Tax Act) were passed. The budget cuts and tax reductions were followed by a deep recession. Supply-side economists had argued that a tax cut would stimulate the economy and the resulting growth would enhance revenues and balance the budget. The promised growth in the economy from the tax cuts did not materialize and deficits soared from \$79 billion in 1981 to \$128 billion in 1982 and \$297 billion in 1983...The reactions to the recession and growing deficits included both a substantial tax increase in 1982 and an effort to pass a balanced budget amendment...*

*The deficit jumped from 1981-83, then dipped in 1984, but grew again to new highs in 1985 and 1986. The growing size of the deficit helped precipitate deficit reduction legislation called Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. This was odd legislation, focused on reducing the size of the deficit year by year, according to preset targets. Failure to reach the targets would trigger an automatic across-the-board cut, called a sequester, that would presumably reduce the size of the deficit to that required by the law. The idea was that the potential negative consequences of a sequester would be sufficiently threatening to both Democrats and Republicans that they would make the necessary cuts beforehand to meet the targets. However, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings targets were never met, and the legislation was revised to ease up the targets and delay them, while the amount of a necessary sequester grew from year to year. The size of the deficits dropped somewhat, but the failure to meet Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction targets and the open evasion of the law were embarrassing to politicians.*

Elsewhere, on that deficit: “Politics ... in the 1980s left us trillions of dollars deeper in debt when wildly optimistic supply-side predictions about the effects of tax cuts proved to be greatly inaccurate. For those who don’t remember, we were promised that the 1981 tax cuts would generate extra economic growth that would pay their \$750 billion costs and would also balance the budget within three years. Instead we got deficits averaging more than \$200 billion a year for the next 12 years. We simply can’t afford to make that mistake again.”

Lessons worth remembering.

---SAS



*(continued from page 3)*

More of us do vote in presidential elections. Last year, Virginia was low at just over 50%; the average was 67.4%. California turnout was 71.5%, at least above average. New Hampshire turnout was 78.5%; it elected women to both of its House seats, which is already represented by two women Senators, and chose a woman governor. (NH now has women in all the major elective positions. In 2008 NH had elected a female majority to its state Senate, and in 1999 was the first state to have women as governor, state Senate president and speaker of its House.) Minnesota, Oregon, and Wisconsin all had turnouts between 80% and 85%, but perhaps the most interesting turnout figure was Wyoming’s at 103.6%, possible because it allows same-day registration, but uses as a base the start-of-the-day figure.

Low turnout is sometimes said to reflect voter satisfaction: there is no need to vote if things are going well. If that is ever the case, it certainly is not now. Voter dissatisfaction with government is quite high on most polls; perhaps the judgment is that voting is not the way to bring about change, that voting does not matter. Since voter turnout does not reflect sex, the numbers don’t tell us if more women than men are voting. Women had to work so long and hard to be granted the right to vote, I would like to think they may value it more highly and use it more faithfully, but even if all voters were female, that would still represent a low turnout. Not everyone eligible is registered; of those who are, only one in five or six bothered to vote. We can hardly say democracy is working. Sad.

~~SAS

# Initiative and Referendum Update Study

Local LWV members met in Unit discussion groups on March 21 to consider whether changes should be made in our state League Initiative and Referendum position. This Update Study focuses on the process of law-making by citizen initiative.

Several questions were discussed:

- \* Should drafts of proposed initiative measures be submitted to official authority for an opinion(s) on clarity, constitutionality, and the single subject requirement? If so, should such review be voluntary or mandatory? Should review results be private, public, lead to a “go” or “no go” decision?
- \* Should the number of signatures and number of days be specified for initiative measures to qualify for the ballot? Should there be differences in such requirements for paid, volunteer, or electronic signature gathering?
- \* Should California voters continue to have the right to amend their constitution through the initiative process? If so, should there be a higher standard for qualifying a constitutional amendment than for an initiative statute (as there is currently)?
- \* If two or more conflicting initiative measures on the same ballot pass, should the provisions of measure(s) with fewer votes be enacted as long as they do not conflict with the measure receiving the most votes? (Presently, only the measure with the most votes becomes law.)
- \* If an initiative measure institutes new requirements for future related issues (e.g., a supermajority vote for new

taxes), should the initiative have to meet those same requirements (e.g., a supermajority) for its own passage?

- \* Should the Legislature be able to amend statutes approved by initiative without going back to a vote of the people? Should the Legislature be able to amend constitutional amendments approved by initiative without going back to a vote of the people? If yes, should there be limitations on the Legislature in doing this (e.g., a waiting period)?
- \* What principles should apply to the initiative process?

Our decisions are being sent to the state League Study Committee, along with member comments. The space for comments is limited, but we like letting our thoughts be known. The LWVC Committee will compile the responses from participating Leagues and, based on these responses, prepare an update of the Position for approval by the State board and the delegates at the convention.

P. S. The Study Update committee did not recommend consideration of changes in the current position’s statements on financing initiative campaigns. The current position calls for realistic limits on contributions and expenditures, and provision for free time for radio and TV information programs. In its Campaign Finance position, state League supports “state campaign finance practices for candidates and advocates of ballot measure positions which will ensure full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures.”

**BC**

## Additions and Corrections for the League 2012-2013 Directory and Yearbook

Please make these changes to your new Yearbook:

Additions:

Bogen, Amy  
1475 Via Zurita  
909.624.8859  
amysgarden@verizon.net

Brunger, Marilyn  
627 Leyden Lane  
909.624.6774  
mislbrunger@aol.com

Monroe, Carolee and Jack  
1015 Indian Hill Blvd  
909.626.8122  
jackncarolee@verizon.net

Osgood, Nancy Tresser  
1670 Houston Ct  
909.731.5848  
njto4747@pomona.edu

Prendergast, Eileen  
1268 Reims St  
909.624.7493  
elchy2@gmail.com

Pruden, Pat  
900 E Harrison A21  
Pomona, CA 91767  
909.399.9015  
ppw76@aol.com

Errata:

Belinkoff, Adar  
adar@belinkoff.com

Benningfield, Virginia  
909.996.3339

Davis, Elizabeth Creese  
Address is in Pomona, CA 91767

Sharon Hightower  
909.624.8902

Welcome to all members and  
apologies for errors and admissions.

**Jerry Klasik**

## Transportation Update

On March 6, after detailed presentations by Authority experts, consultants and stakeholders, the Gold Line Construction Authority board of directors certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Azusa to Montclair segment of the project, selecting the Locally Preferred Alternative for the next phase of the Foothill Extension.

The board's deliberations led to the critical decision milestone, which allows the Authority to start preparing for advanced conceptual engineering and design, ultimately readying the now-certified project for nearly \$1 billion in funding.

Attending the Board meeting were representatives from Congresswoman Judy Chu, Senator Carol Liu, Assembly member Norma Torres, City of Claremont's

Councilmember Sam Pedroza, City of Pomona, Metrolink, Citrus College and the University of La Verne, among others. The continued support and open dialogue from the entire community will ensure the project's success in each of the communities it travels.

*Peter Yao*



(Ed. note: *Ellen Taylor, our Action Vice President wrote the Goldline Construction Authority Board encouraging them to allow the Azusa to Montclair segment to proceed. Excerpts of her letter are included here; as Peter Yao's report makes clear, her plea (along with others) was successful and the project is moving ahead.*)

Board members:

...it is truly exciting to be at a point of approving the project and having a certified environmental document. As a long-time resident of the city of Claremont, and a former mayor, I have supported the extension from Azusa to Montclair many times over the years.

...Having the Gold Line reach Montclair, just makes sense. Along the 12-mile route, county residents and visitors will be able to reach the Claremont Colleges, University of La Verne, Los Angeles County Fairplex, among other important regional destinations. Importantly, it will also allow residents and visitors from Claremont and the Inland Empire to reach destinations throughout the county of Los Angeles, all without the need for a car.

Our region is far behind in providing sustainable and permanent transit options for our residents, and the Gold Line will be an important step forward for all of the communities along the Foothills of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.

In 2008 county voters overwhelmingly approved Measure R. The Azusa to Montclair segment voters were part of that success and were promised the extension to Montclair.

....The League firmly supports transportation systems for the Claremont area based on actual need with priority given to environmental, social and safety factors. A public transportation system that provides mobility for all residents is important and we support a system that takes into consideration energy conservation and encouragement of alternatives to the automobile,

I encourage you to move forward tonight, so the Authority can start seeking the additional funding necessary to make that promise a reality. It will still take years potentially to secure enough funds to build this important segment, and we cannot start soon enough.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Ellen Taylor*

### In Memoriam

Lynn Tobin Jackson, long-time League member, passed away on March 7, 2013. She was very active from the '60's through and beyond the '90's, contributing to our studies, helping with fundraising, and participating in the Speakers' Bureau. During this time she also served on the Claremont Unified School Board of Education. She will surely be missed.

This schedule is subject to change

Date	Type	Location/Time	Topic
Saturday, March 30	LWV of L.A.County Convention	Rio Hondo Country Club, Downey, 9:00 am	Speaker: Don Knabe Annual business meeting
Monday, April 8	Sustainability Dialog #35	Hahn Bldg., Havard and Harrison Aves., 7:00 pm	Marilyn Hempel, <i>Overshoot! The Fierce Urgency of Now</i>
Tuesday, April 9	Sustainable Claremont/LWV meeting	Claremont Library Meeting room, 6:00 pm	Earth Day celebration: <i>Perspectives on a Sustainable Future: Economic, Social, and Environmental</i>
Wednesday, April 17	LWV of the Claremont Area Board Meeting	Garner House, Memorial Park, 7:00 pm	
Thursday, April 18	Unit/Discussion	MSAG, D Building, 9:30 am Sue's, 845 N. Indian Hill, 7 pm	Health Care
Wednesday, May 15	LWV of the Claremont Area Board Meeting	Garner House, Memorial Park, 7:00 pm	
Thursday, May 16	Unit/Discussion,	MSAG, D Building, 9:30 am Sue's, 845 N. Indian Hill, 7 pm	LWV Observers reports on local governmental agencies
Saturday, June 1	Annual Meeting	Padua Room, Hughes Center, 10 am to noon	Election of officers, approval of budget, program for coming year