

# The Voter

Late Summer 2014

## OPENING MEETING

### ***Water: Preserving the Resource, Locally and Regionally***

**Sunday, September 14, 2014**

**2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

**Padua Room, Hughes Center, 1700 Danbury Road, Claremont**

## Will We All Have Water?

**Drought:** The most recent report (8/12/14) of the U. S. Drought Monitor indicates that more than 80% of California continues to be in the extreme drought category. There have been reports that an *El Nino* might be developing in the eastern Pacific that would bring rain to Southern California. Now meteorologists are suggesting that the *El Nino* might not develop and bring as much rain as previously expected.

A number of actions have been taken by various government entities in an attempt to deal with the drought. Much effort has been expended on encouraging water conservation. However, the public has not reduced its consumption of water and, in some parts of the state, consumption has actually increased. In response, the State Water Resources Control Board approved measures that are designed to reduce water consumption. The measures include fines of up to \$500 for wasteful use of water in irrigating gardens, washing cars and cleaning property. Governor Brown signed legislation that would block fines for lawns that went brown as part of a water conservation strategy.

In addition, there was much maneuvering in Sacramento over the past week regarding the content of a water bond. An \$11 billion bond deferred from 2009 was scheduled for the November ballot. However, this bond had been deemed too full of pork to get voter support. After

extended negotiations, the legislature and the governor agreed on a \$7.5 billion package for the November election. This ballot measure (titled Proposition 1) will provide money for water storage (dams), cleanup of contaminated groundwater,, and additional clean drinking water for the state.

There is opposition to this bond proposal from some on the grounds that the proposal is not "tunnel neutral." This refers to Governor Brown's proposal to build two tunnels around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to siphon water off the Sacramento River for export to the southern part of the state. Such exports have been limited in recent times due to endangered fish in the Delta. Brown claims this proposal is "tunnel neutral." Opponents of the tunnels are leery. They claim it would support habitat protection, which could help ecological problems created by the tunnels. They would argue that the tunnels should not be built at all.

In any event, the legislature acted just in the nick of time and the debate about the bond proposal can begin in earnest. Given that the drought will likely continue, we will also hear additional calls for water conservation, recycling, and stormwater capture. For more information on the drought: <http://mavensnotebook.com>.

*Jack Sullivan*

## Co-Presidents' Message

As September approaches, the LWV of the Claremont Area looks forward to engaging new and renewing members, friends and neighbors at our Opening Meeting on **September 14 from 2:00-3:30pm** at the *Padua Room* in the *Hughes Community Center*.

In addition to hearing about plans for the 2014-2015 League year, the meeting will feature a **Water Panel** of experts from our local area. Water is everyone's concern in the coming years. The panel will explore the question of "What can be done to preserve the resource, locally and regionally?" There will be time for a Q and A session at the conclusion.

**October** provides you with an opportunity to attend a **Pros and Cons** presentation. Our local League members present both sides of the argument of each of the Measures that appear on your ballot. Please check our website to find out where you might hear these presentations and the schedule of candidate forums.

On November 9, 2014, join us for a '**Food for Thought**' gathering to hear Dr. David Menefee-Libey of the Pomona College faculty share his take on some of the outcomes of the November election. Please watch our website for a time and place.

The **First Thursday of the month** at 7:00pm at the Garner house in Memorial Park is when the board of LWV of the Claremont Area meets. Guests are welcome to attend.

**Hope to see many of you at the Opening Meeting on Sunday, September 14.**

Ruth Currie, Co-President and Jerlyn Klasik, Co-President

## Fundraising/Development Report

To raise operating funds in the absence of an Auction/Dinner event, the Development Committee sent a fundraising letter to over 5000 local residents in the spring of 2013. In response, 15 LWV members gave \$6300 and 19 non-members gave \$850. An expensive endeavor, the net was only about \$4500.

In May 2014, letters in bright yellow envelopes were sent to 200 members and 300 non-members and local businesses. This appeal brought in about \$7200 from 33 LWV members and about \$850 from 16 non-members. Since members underwrote mailing expenses, all \$8050 went into the LWV treasury, almost double the proceeds from last year, and responses are still coming in.

After per-member-payments (PMP) to National, State, and County Leagues, our local League retains only 10% of the dues we collect, not enough to sustain our local operations, especially in an election year. We believe our efforts are important to an informed citizenry and help to get out the vote.

Thank you very much if you have already responded to the last appeal. If you have not, please remember – no amount is too small or too late! Thank you for all your contributions to our local League operations.

*Karen Rosenthal, Chair, Development Committee*

## LWV of the Claremont Area Annual Meeting

Our local League held its annual meeting at the Hughes Center in Claremont on June 7, 2014. Our Co-Presidents, Jerry Klasik and Ruth Currie led the proceedings. The proposed \$24,235 Budget for 2014-15 was approved, as were minor revisions to the Bylaws as listed in the *Call to Annual Meeting Program*.

Discussion included the announcement that our application to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to become a 501(c)(3) organization was rejected because the IRS is no longer accepting group applications. Our League had joined with other local California LWVs in applying for this IRS status.

Current officers were re-elected. They were thanked for their service, as were the three Directors leaving the Board -- Katie Gerecke, Beth Smith, and Amy Ochoa. Katie will continue as our League archivist, Amy will serve on the 2014-2015 Nominating Committee, and Judith Tanenbaum will take over from Beth as Voter Editor. Diann Ring will Chair the Nominating Committee, and Hilary LaConte will continue serving as a Committee member.

League Members also voted to approve the Board-recommended Program – an update of our Redevelopment Position and education and advocacy on the issues of Water and Sustainability. A “conversation mapping” activity, led by Kathy Bresnan, involved members writing ideas for expanding membership on their paper table covers. Directions to the Board included requests to support the City of Claremont’s purchase of its water company, participate in Earth Day, add a publicist to our organization, register voters, and get the “Pros and Cons” election guides out sooner.

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### Children’s Issues: Working Party for Children (WPC)

The Working Party for Children met in Los Angeles on August 6 and decided to support three current bills:

**SB 192 (Liu): Quality Child Care** – Basically a technical bill to reorganize the Child Care and Development Services Act to provide a comprehensive early learning support system promoting access to safe, high quality early learning; developing standards for implementation; expanding flexibility for contractors to serve local families based on community needs; and updating the definition of “migrant family”.

**Status:** In the State Budget; now in Assembly Education Committee Suspense File.

**SB 837 (Steinberg): Traditional Kindergarten Expansion** – Now a compromise bill: Besides expanding Transition Kindergarten (TK) to include children most in need and wrap-around care, it would make TK available to all 4-year olds, phased in over a 5-year period.

**Status:** In the Budget; now in Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File.

**SB 1123 (Liu): California Strong Start** – Originally for infants-toddlers, the bill has been expanded, is less well defined, but still worth supporting. It includes parent education, prioritizes children eligible for State Preschool Programs, and sets staffing requirements for subsidized child care programs, among other things.

**Status:** In the Budget; now in Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File.

*Note: Bills in the suspense file are awaiting action by the legislature.*

*Katie Gerecke*

## November 2014 Ballot Propositions

According to the California Secretary of State's website, the following Propositions have qualified for the November 4, 2014 General Election.

Proposition 43 – **Water Bond. Funding for Water Quality, Supply, Treatment and Storage Projects.** This Legislative Bond Act is still being amended in the State Legislature. See water article, page one.

Proposition 44 – **State Budget. Budget Stabilization Account.** A Legislative Constitutional Amendment establishing the Budget Stabilization Account within the state General Fund and requiring the Legislature to appropriate from this Account funds (within specified limits) for designated fiscal obligations of the state including repayment of budgetary loans, school funding obligations, accrued claims for mandate costs, unfunded pension liabilities, and prefunding of other postemployment benefits. Fiscal emergencies could temporarily suspend these requirements. This measure would further establish the Public School System Stabilization Account to provide a reserve for public school funding.

Proposition 45 – **Healthcare Insurance. Rate Changes.** An Initiative Statute requiring health insurance rate changes to be approved by the State Insurance Commissioner; it does not apply to employer large group health plans.

Proposition 46 – **Drug and Alcohol Testing of Doctors. Medical Negligence Lawsuits.** An initiative Statute requiring drug and alcohol testing of doctors, reporting of positive results to the State Medical Board, and disciplinary action if doctor was impaired while on duty. Requires health care practitioners to consult state prescription history database before prescribing controlled medicines. Increases the present cap (\$250,000) on pain and suffering awards in medical malpractice suits to account for inflation.

Proposition 47 – **Criminal Sentences. Misdemeanor Penalties.** An initiative Statute requiring misdemeanor instead of felony sentences for the crimes of forging/writing bad checks, receiving stolen property, and petty theft when the amount or value involved is less than \$950. However, it would allow for felony sentences for these offenses for persons with previous convictions for major crimes such as rape, murder, child molestation, or persons registered as sex offenders. The savings to state and county criminal justice systems would be applied to mental health and drug treatment programs, K-12 schools, and crime victims.

Proposition 48 – **Indian Gaming Compacts.** A referendum to suspend a state law, already passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, approving two gaming compacts, one with the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians, and one with the Wiyot Tribe. The law would then need to be approved by a majority of voters at the next state General Election to go into effect.

Proposition 49 – **Corporations. Political Spending. Federal Constitutional Protections.** This is a Legislative Advisory Measure which asks voters if the Congress of the United States should propose, and the California Legislature should ratify amendment(s) to the U. S. Constitution to overturn *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010) 558 U.S. 310*. Removed following State Supreme Court action in early August.

### In Memoriam

Longtime League member and supporter **Luzma Brayton** passed away June 19, 2014. Condolences are extended to her husband, Tim Brayton, who emceed many LWV auctions.

The Board has been discussing the distribution of *The Voter* electronically, which would not only save paper and money, but would also allow us to provide more information, pictures, and links to important issues.

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Did you know...

*The Voter* is available at our website?  
[claremont.ca.lwvnet.org/Voter.html](http://claremont.ca.lwvnet.org/Voter.html)

## Ballot Initiative Transparency Act (BITA)

The initiative process in California dates back to 1911, an attempt by Governor Hiram Johnson to reduce the influence of special interests in legislation, but is not without flaws. According to a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) survey, 83% of Californians believe initiative wording is too complicated and confusing, and 84% favor increasing public disclosure of funding sources for both signature-gathering and initiative campaigns. Almost as many (77%) support an early review process to help avoid legal problems and drafting errors.

Over the past year, more than 60 civic groups exchanged ideas about improving the initiative process. A number of them, including LWV of CA, CA Common Cause, CA NAACP, and CA AARP, are supporting a bill now working its way through our State legislature, SB 1253. This bill, the Ballot Initiative Transparency Act, was introduced by California Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg in an attempt to create clearer initiatives, simpler ballots, and better information for voters.

Briefly, SB 1253

- Requires ballot materials be drafted in clear, impartial language
- Requires the Secretary of State to create one-stop access to a summary of each measure and identification of donors and other sources of funding for campaigns for and against the measure
- Requires the Attorney General to implement a 30-day public review process of the proposed initiative before circulation for signatures
- Allows corrections to measures after public review and before circulation for signatures
- Extends the amount of time, from 25 to 45 days, for Department of Finance and Legislative Analyst to send their fiscal analysis to the Attorney General
- Extends the signature-gathering period from 150 days (5 months) to 180 days (6 months)
- Once 25% of necessary signatures are gathered, requires the Secretary of State to send copies of an initiative to the Legislature for public hearing
- Allows proponents of an initiative to withdraw their initiative no later than 132 days before Election Day
- Establishes a new crime: accepting anything of value in return for withdrawing a petition once it is filed

“What BITA will ensure is that the information voters receive will be better,” said Helen Hutchison, Vice President for Advocacy and Program, LWVC. “Initiatives can be confusing and poorly written. Voters deserve clear and straight-forward information about what initiatives do. This bill creates guidelines to ensure that the information voters receive is written in clear and straight-forward language.”

*Ellen Taylor*

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### **Helen Hutchison Appointed President to Fight for Voting Rights and Engage Californians in Civic Life**

Last month, Helen Hutchison of Oakland was appointed President of the League of Women Voters of California and the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund to serve a one-year term to fight for voting rights, responsible public policy, and to lead the charge in providing accessible, nonpartisan election information to all Californians.

“I am thrilled to lead our grassroots members and supporters in the fight for voting rights and will remain steadfast in our commitment to providing nonpartisan election information for California's diverse population,” Hutchison said. “We will continue to work hard for smart and responsible public policy to make our Golden State a fair and vibrant place for us all,” she added.

# Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policies

As Announced by the National Board May 2014

The League believes that government should provide financial support for agriculture that includes disaster assistance, crop insurance, need-based loans and incentives to adopt best management practices. Support should be extended to specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables and nuts, to new production methods, such as organic, hydroponic, and urban practices, and to farms that supply local and regional markets.

Subsidized crop yield insurance should be linked to implementation of best management practices with the subsidy denied for marginal or environmentally sensitive land. The premium subsidy for crop insurance should be available for a wide range of crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops. Government should limit the amount of the premium subsidy received by larger farms.

The League supports policies that increase competition in agricultural markets. Antitrust laws should be enforced to ensure competitive agricultural markets. Alternative marketing systems such as regional hub markets, farmers' markets, and farmer cooperatives should be promoted.

Clean air and water regulations should apply to all animal and aquaculture production and processing facilities, and not just to the very large confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Such regulations should be designed in a manner that takes into account environmentally sound technologies and the scale of the operation being regulated. Small size operations should not be granted automatic exemption from regulation.

The League believes that government regulatory agencies dealing with animal and aquaculture production should have adequate authority and funding to (1) enforce regulations and (2) gather information that supports monitoring the impacts of all animal feeding and aquaculture operations on human and animal health and the environment.

Government should fund basic research related to agriculture. Government funded research should also address the impact of new technologies on human health and the environment prior to widespread adoption of products developed with such technologies. Assessment of products developed with new technologies should be conducted as transparently as possible, while respecting intellectual property rights. Research should be funded to support the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems, such as seed banking and promoting and preserving genetic diversity.

To provide adequate safety of our food supply, government should:

- Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for foods and food additives developed using any new chemical technology, such as genetic engineering or nanotechnology;
- Require developers to monitor all such new food products developed after releasing to the market;
- Require developers of such new food products to provide data and other materials to independent third parties for pre- and post-marketing safety assessment;
- Fund independent third party risk assessment examining how long-term and multiple exposures to such new foods affect human health and the environment;
- Withdraw marketing approval and require recall if such products are shown to be unsafe;
- Require post-market monitoring of human health and environmental impacts for pharmaceutical applications used in animal and aquaculture production;
- Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to the treatment of disease;
- Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals; and
- Fund, employ, and train sufficient personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies.

The League supports government developing and requiring more informative and standardized definitions on product labeling. Food labeling and advertising should display only approved health and safety claims and an accurate representation of the required ingredient and nutrition lists. The League supports consumer education about labeling of foods developed using any new technology.

## Voting Rights – A League Priority

by Elisabeth MacNamara, LWWUS President

LWWUS is working to get the Voting Rights Amendment Act passed by Congress to ensure the right to vote for all eligible citizens. Forty-nine years ago, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act (VRA) into law. The VRA was a cornerstone achievement of the civil rights movement that ensured that every American citizen, regardless of race or language, had equal access to the right to vote. That is until last June, when the U.S. Supreme Court gutted a key part of the Voting Rights Act, leading to a full frontal attack on the voting rights of all Americans. With no legislative fix passed in the past year, voting rights remain at risk today.

H.R. 3899, the Voting Rights Amendment Act (VRAA), offers nationwide protections for current threats to voting rights. The legislation provides new tools to stop voting discrimination before it occurs, as well as ensuring that proposed election changes are transparent. Unfortunately, because the U.S. House refuses to move this bipartisan, common sense solution forward, the right to vote for all Americans is in danger.

The VRAA is an important step forward for our democracy, where the right to vote is not about politics or the outcome of elections. This legislation will modernize the coverage of the Voting Rights Act to ensure it is based on recent acts of discrimination and provide narrow but appropriate mechanisms to prevent discrimination in voting nationwide. The right to vote is one of the most basic rights in our country and it must be protected.

Access to the vote is not about politics; it's about justice and equality. Every day that Congress fails to pass this critical legislation, Americans are in danger of increased barriers at the polls.

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### National League Convention

LWWUS held its biennial Convention in Dallas, TX in June, 2014.

- The national League president's election was contested by the floor nomination of Deidre McNabb, the Florida LWW president; campaigning was spirited. In the end, the current president, Elisabeth MacNamara, was re-elected by a substantial margin.
- An effort to support amending the U.S. Constitution to prohibit unlimited corporation spending in elections was defeated. However, an item for studying and reviewing the amendment process, updating campaign finance, and reviewing the redistricting process passed.
- The Convention voted to adopt two positions by concurrence:
  - the New Jersey LWW position against human trafficking
  - the Kansas LWW position on the establishment of a living wage
- Resolutions spoke to
  - (1) support for a carbon emissions tax;
  - (2) restoration of federal voting rights to citizens with felony convictions after release, parole, or probation;
  - (3) quick action on certain program items.
- Lastly, the PMP (per-member-payment) that local Leagues pay to the LWWUS was increased to \$31 for 2014-2015, and \$32 for 2015-2016.

Claremont did not send delegates to this Convention, but a delegate from another Los Angeles County League, attending for the first time, found the experience "very impressive".



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 Jerry Klasik

VP of Administration: Tressa Kentner

**Voter** Editor: Judith Tanenbaum

Tech Consultant: Robin Tanenbaum

**Late Summer 2014**

Return Service Requested

LWV Claremont Area 2014 Program/Events

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Topic/Theme</b>	<b>Other</b>
Sunday, August 30 1-3 p.m.	Garner House, Claremont 840 N. Indian Hill Blvd.	New member event	
Sunday, Sept. 14 2-3:30 p.m.	Hughes Center, Padua Room 1700 Danbury Rd., Claremont	<b>Opening meeting</b> California Gold Rush: Preserving Water, Regionally and Locally	This year's opening meeting will feature a discussion of local and regional water issues. Join us for this important topic.
Tuesday, Sept. 23	Across the U.S.A.	National Voter Registration Day	League of Women Voters is a proud partner of this event.
Saturday, Sept. 27, 9:30 a.m. - noon	Hollenbeck Palms 573 S. Boyle Ave., L.A.	Ballot Briefing and Action Workshop	Pros & Cons of the Nov. ballot measures LWV/LAC sponsored
Monday, Oct. 20		Last day to register to vote for November's general election	
Tuesday, Nov. 4 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Your polling place	General election	
Sunday, Nov. 9	Details to be announced	Food for Thought: Outcomes of November Election	Talk by Professor David Menefee-Libey