



Voter

www.lwvpalosverdes.org

(310) 784-7787

May /June 2015

Calendar 2015

Wednesday May 13	Board Meeting	Noon	Nell Mirels' House
Thurs. - Sun May 14-17	State Convention	Westin San Diego Gaslight Quarter 910 Broadway Circle	San Diego
Wednesday May 27	Deadline for menu choices for local convention		
Saturday June 6	Local Convention Jackie Bacharach Speaker	9:30 AM	PV Golf Club 3301 Via Campensia PV Estates
Fri-Sun, June 19-21	LWVUS Council		Washington DC
Saturday July 18	Popovers Speaker: Supervisor Shelia Kuehl		Pasadena Womens' City Club

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This Month's Co-Presidents' Message

Spring is now well underway and we are close to end of Local League year. Our dues are due in June. Please remember that they are now tax deductible. We also welcome any additional monies that you might like to donate to our program. One new expense is a new internship program that Julie Craemer and her daughter Karena are putting together to hire interns to set up and run social media sites for our local league. Unfortunately we only have Karena's help for a few more days before she is off to start her own career, but we certainly do thank her for her efforts to bring us into this century. Most of us "older league members" just are not savvy with all the social media of today but we hope with this effort to reach a younger audience and hopefully entice a few of them to join us. The league has a long history of impacting our government with our studies and our focus on involving citizens in voting and keeping up with issues that may escape the public's notice but are important. We hope with these new sites to continue this tradition. We have had several impressive applicants for these internships and hope to be able to have two interns who will set us up and keep track of these sites. We are offering a small stipend but think this effort may very well be helpful for the working public.

Please note that our local convention is coming up at the beginning of June (6/6/15)—we hope to see many of you and hope you will also save the date for "Popovers" that is coming on July 18. This last Saturday, our Pat Colby put on another impressive program with the new Superintendent of Palos Verdes Schools, Dr. Donald B. Austin. After a short presentation he opened the floor to a variety of questions from the audience. The good news is our local schools continue to turn out high achieving students and he is working on all the deferred maintenance of the physical buildings.

With the smaller number of active members, the local leagues are often teaming with other active groups for our programs. This was true for Beach Cities recent program on Homelessness (April 27), a county wide "How To" program on Advocacy and Action (April 25), and our own education program teamed with the help of the local PTA (May 2). We are currently planning a program in Human Trafficking with our local Chamber of Commerce for the fall. Please check your emails for flyers for coming events.

Also of current note are two of our members, Nancy Mahr and Katy Watkins, providing a power point presentation for new citizens on voting being held May 19 and 21 in local libraries.

Vi Jungerich (310-541-5092) and *Jo-Anne Waller* (310-544-9263)
Co-Presidents

“MONEY IN POLITICS”

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/BEACH CITIES’ TRI-LEAGUE PRESENTATION - MARCH 23, 2015

Summarized by Pat Colby

“Money in Politics” presenter Hinnaneh Qazi of California Common Cause, was the featured guest at the LWV/Beach Cities’ Tri-League Lasagna Supper at the Torrance Memorial Library on March 23, 2015.

Ms. Qazi spoke of the stranglehold of big money interests on politics and the importance of putting democracy back into the hands of California voters. She reminded her audience that if you want to run for Congress, you need money. A lot of money. Using figures from the MapLight U.S. Research Guide, Ms. Qazi quoted the following: To win election, U.S. House members raised, on average, **\$2,315 per day**, every day, for an entire two-year term—including weekends and holidays. That’s \$1.7 million per House Member, on average. Winning senators raised \$10.5 million, on average--**\$14,351 per day** (figures based on the 2012 election).

The main source of this campaign money is interest groups that want something from government. Once elected, politicians often pay back their campaign contributors with special access and favorable laws. This common practice is contrary to the public interest.

Unfettered money has changed politics through two recent Supreme Court decisions: Citizens United and McCutcheon. In 2010, the Supreme Court issued the Citizens United ruling. Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission is now a constitutional law dealing with regulation of campaign spending by organizations. The U.S. Supreme Court held that the First Amendment prohibited government from restricting independent political expenditures by a non-profit organization. A dramatic rise in “outside spending” occurred as a result of this decision. “Outside spending” refers to political expenditures made by groups or individuals independently of, and not coordinated with, candidates’ committees. Groups in this

category range from conventional party committees to the more controversial super PACs and 501 (c) (4) “dark money” organizations which aren’t required to publicly report their donors. Outside spending has exploded in the last three federal elections and is highly focused on competitive races. In 80% of competitive 2014 races, outside spenders outspent the candidates—sometimes by more than double. The increasing dominance of outside money is giving the wealthiest few Americans more and more control of the political process. The highest spending super PACs depend overwhelmingly on large donations in the five and six figure range, amounts out of the range of all but a few Americans.

Shaun McCutcheon, an Alabama businessman, teamed with the Republican National Committee to challenge a federal law limiting him and other political donors to \$123,200 in contributions to federal candidates and party committees in a single election cycle. In 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that these aggregate limits violated McCutcheon’s First Amendment rights to free speech. The majority decision retained limits on donations to a single candidate, currently \$5,200 (\$2,600 each for a primary and general election) but said the law cannot restrict the number of candidates to whom a donor can contribute. With the overall contribution limits eliminated, an individual donor who elects to give the maximum to every presidential, House and Senate candidate and party committee could spend up to \$3.6 million per election cycle. And all of that money could be solicited by a single candidate, who would have a powerful incentive to follow the donor’s wishes on legislation and other matters. Citizens United and McCutcheon dramatically expanded the ability of wealthy individuals, corporations and groups to spend as much as they like to influence elections.

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Money in Politics - continued from page 3

Common Cause urges an overturn of these two Supreme Court rulings by:

- Support for a constitutional amendment permitting Congress and the States to set reasonable limits on spending.
- Support for ballot measures and legislative resolutions limiting spending. 16 states, 654 localities and 50 California cities have called on Congress to pass an amendment and send it to the states for ratification. These jurisdictions are home to more than 120 .million Americans.
- Support “Fair Election” programs that allow candidates to rely on small donations from individuals and matching grants from special tax supported funds.
- Toughening disclosure laws; let voters know who’s trying to buy our elections.
- Giving shareholders control of corporate political donations.

If you are interested in “Money In Politics”, become a member of our local study committee preparing for the LWVUS study on “Money in Politics” in the fall.

Important Notices and Reminders

On May 19 and 21, **Nancy Mahr** and **Katy Watkins** will be doing PowerPoint presentations for new citizens at some of our local libraries, entitled “How to Vote.”

Reminder: Your membership dues are due in June. They will now be tax deductible! We will send notices after our local convention.

“**The Village**” now has their own web site and our League will no longer be sending out news about them.

www.peninsulavillage.net

Welcome To Our Newest Member

Donna Tarr
63 Ranch View
RHE CA 90274

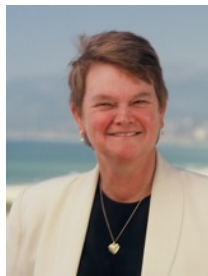
310-378-7881

Email: donnatarr777@gmail.com

Save the Date

Saturday July 18th

**Popovers in Pasadena!
Our speaker will be
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl**



UPDATE ON RANCHO LPG STORAGE TANKS

by

LWV PVP Land Use Committee

The Rancho LPG storage facility on North Gaffey Street in San Pedro was constructed 40 years ago under an industrial zoning from World War II. The 20 acre facility includes two 80 foot-high storage tanks capable of holding up to 25 million gallons of liquefied petroleum gas, such as highly flammable butane and propane. The site is about 1,000 feet from residential areas that existed before construction of the tanks. Residents, local activists and elected officials contend the facility is unsafe and fear that a major explosion would destroy the nearby community. Officials of Rancho LPG, a unit of Houston-based Plains All American Pipeline, say the tanks are well maintained and equipped with an array of safety measures, including monitors, sprinkler systems, automatic shut-off valves and dikes to contain gas spills.



Concerns about the facility in the surrounding neighborhood simmered for years. Those concerns were heightened following the explosion of an underground natural gas transmission line in a residential neighborhood of San Bruno, California in 2010. The City of Los Angeles' Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council commissioned a risk assessment of Rancho LPG. The Cornerstone Report, as the assessment was called, identified possible accident scenarios, ranging from small impacts to sudden catastrophic failure at the butane tanks with impact extending for several miles from the facility. In response, Rancho LPG commissioned its own risk assessment, called the Quest Report, which concluded that the area affected by a catastrophic event would be far less than that identified in the Cornerstone Report. Third-party independent assessments of the Cornerstone and Quest reports, prepared at the request of the Environmental Protection Agency, generally concluded that the Cornerstone Report had exaggerated the risk of catastrophic outcomes at the facility and that the Quest Report defined more realistic actual risk to the surrounding community. The operations at Rancho LPG have

also been investigated by the Los Angeles City Attorney and the State Attorney General, neither of whom found cause for legal action against the facility operator. Furthermore, it was pointed out that a prior lawsuit filed against the former owner of the facility (Don Brown v. Petrolane, 1980) was unsuccessful under both public and private nuisance theories, and the facility was not closed or relocated as a result of the lawsuit.

Despite the risk assessments and investigations, the facility continues to be a point of controversy in the surrounding community. Community opponents of the facility have presented their concerns before local, State and Federal officials and agencies. In 2012 opponents testified before Los Angeles City Councilman, Joe Buscaino and the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee. In prior years, they have asked for assistance from former City Council Woman, Janice Hahn and Rancho Palos Verdes Peninsula Councilman, Brian Campbell. In August, 2013 former Congressional Representative Henry Waxman, urged federal officials to more thoroughly investigate the safety of Rancho LPG which is located near homes, schools and shopping areas in San Pedro. Waxman arranged a meeting between representatives of the Department of Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency. Waxman noted that preliminary findings of an on-going EPA investigation at the tank site

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indicate the company has not provided its emergency response plan to local public safety agencies has failed to assess the risk of its rail storage area and has failed to plan for earthquakes. In contrast, the congressman noted that homeland security's anti-terrorism program for chemical facilities recently gave Rancho LPG passing marks for safety after an inspection. Waxman added that the chemical facilities program has a long record of ineffectiveness and has shown "a distressing lack of progress in securing these facilities since the program was established six years ago." In addition to Waxman's activities, former State Senator Ted Lieu asked the state fire marshal to investigate the Rancho facility and assess the risks of the site. Both Lieu and Waxman cited a recent propane explosion in Florida at a Blue Whale gas plant that was much smaller than the Rancho operation. The blast seriously injured some workers and forced an evacuation of the surrounding community.

At the least Rancho LPG should provide its emergency response plan to local public safety agencies for their evaluation of the plan's safety and effectiveness

Photos from our May 2nd forum with the new PVPUSD Superintendent, Dr. Donald Austin:



Linda Herman and Cynthia Kondon

Jo-Anne Waller and Pat Colby (below)



Dr. Austin and Co-President, Jo-Anne Waller

American Indians in L. A. County

by Viola Iungerich

Few residents realize that LA County has more native urban Indians than any other place in the United States. And even fewer people know why this is so.

The interesting story has roots in our history. Before Europe discovered the Americas, there was a thriving native population that covered all of the United States. Evidence shows that as long ago as 11,000 years there have been people in these lands and quite possibly even longer.

Currently there are 566 tribes recognized by our government. These are not all the known tribes. Many have so few peoples they are no longer recognized legally, while in other cases all in a tribe have died. Also when the government was moving people into reservations, some people escaped, denied their Indian heritage and lived among us. This has legal ramifications now as some families have a tradition of saying they have Indian heritage but cannot prove it because they cannot trace their ancestors to those that were registered to a tribe as they were moved.

Most of us know of the movement of Indians to reservations, but many do not understand the legal ramifications of these moves. Much of the tragedies of tribes have to do with cultural misunderstandings. Europeans have a linear world view, while native peoples see the world in relational/cyclic terms. Native people do not see the land as something you own but see it more like air that belongs to everyone. People use air, water and land as necessities for life, not as personal belongings. When the United States tried to impose our world view on the Indians, misunderstandings continued to undo the native people. The government assigned quantities of land to individual families based on their number and assumed they would farm the land. But the Indians saw the land as needing to be used by the entire people. The government did not give the land outright to the tribes but let them use it while still considering the reservations federal lands—the government often took back parcels

American Indians in LA County - continued from page 6

that individual families were no longer using. The tribes of course objected to this.

The government came up with a variety of solutions to these misunderstandings. One solution was to educate (forcible as it turned out) to our world view. In 1878, Indian children were removed from their parents and sent to boarding schools where there were attempts to completely extinguish their Indian culture and substitute the European ways. Indian dress, language and cultural thoughts were forbidden and when these re-indoctrinated children were returned eventually, they often were not accepted back. Many of these Indians then returned to our cities to live as best they could. The effort to stamp out Indian thought and culture continued. In 1881, Indian religion was officially outlawed. The whole native culture was outlawed—a culture that saw life as an integrated cycle that needed to stay in balance to be health. In 1888 the Dawes Act was passed which allowed any reservation land “un-allotted”—that is not currently assigned to some person to be opened to settlement. This was during a particularly harrowing time of the Indian wars which did not end until 1890. Very slowly the world changed. However, in the 60’s, the government still trying to “help” the Indians, offered them an opportunity to move off the reservations to cities. Los Angeles offered Native Americans (they became citizens in 1924) financial support for education, housing and employment training if they came to the city. And they did. We currently have the largest population of urban Indians—a little over 142,000. However, this offer also was tied to some concerns. Officials were still worried that with their history they might group together and cause problems, so they were spread out all over the county.

In the last century, more people became aware and educated about Indian problems. The differences in culture and world view also became more widely known as did many Indian problems. Because Indians cannot metabolize alcohol, they can easily become alcoholics. Also due to the cultural suppression, depression is common in their populations. In 1957, they were given the

right to vote. In 1959 through 1964 with the War on Poverty, resources were put in place to try and heal some of the injustice to the native peoples. In the 70’s, the Indians became more empowered to fight for their rights and in 1978 the Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act were signed into law. The reestablishment of Indian rights continues to this day.

In Los Angeles, because of the total number of Indians, there are a variety of support systems, educational systems, and movements. Most county services in Los Angeles are sensitive to the Indian population and many have special units or departments. For example, in the Department of Children and Family Services there is a unit in the department that services Indian children. If an Indian child is brought into the department, a whole set of laws apply called ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act). This is because the tribes see the removal of their children as another way to extinguish the native peoples. The tribe therefore has legal say as to what happens to an Indian child and can opt to take the child back into the tribe or say what happens to the child. Central High School in Los Angeles is a LAUSD high school that has a program for Native Americans that is culturally sensitive where students can obtain a high school diploma. Both UCLA and California State University, Long Beach have American Indian studies.

Since the Indians in this county are from multiple tribes, they have banded together to support each other and to share traditions. There are many POW-WOWs on weekends where natives come together to network, show off their native dress and dances and support one another. If interested, you can attend one of these functions easily by looking on line (see POW WOW calendar).

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PALOS VERDES PENINSULA
CALL TO CONVENTION



ANNUAL CONVENTION 2015
SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2015

PV Golf Club
3301 Via Campesina
PVE, CA

(Margate Room-lower level)
9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Jackie Bacharach

REGISTRATION & LUNCH \$35

Make check out to LWVPVP and mail to:

Terry Arnush
6018 Via Sonoma, RPV, 90275

NAME: _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ for _____ person(s)

Please submit reservations and **menu choice** by **May 27, 2014**

Salmon Caesar Salad

Kale, Quinoa, Almonds, Grapes and Tomato Salad



Join The League!

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to all men and women who are registered voters.

Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Just fill out the membership form below and mail it to:

LWV PVP, PO Box 2933, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274.

Please make checks payable to *LWV PVP*

Membership Form

Name _____

Name(s) of additional member(s) in household _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (home) _____ Phone (work/day/cell) _____

Email address _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

\$65.00 one member

\$32.50 additional member in the same household.

Dues are tax deductible. LWV PVP is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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