



Voter

www.lwvpalosverdes.org

(310) 784-7787

November/December 2013

Calendar 2013 -2014

Tuesday Nov 5	Election Day	All Day	
Wednesday Nov 13	Board Meeting	Noon	Joan Hogan's
Friday Nov 15	Elected Officials Party	5:30 - 7:30 PM	Interpretive Center
Sunday Nov 24	Local Program Planning	2:30 - 4:30 PM	Vi lungerich's
Wednesday Dec 11	Board Meeting/Potluck	Noon	Joan Hogan's
Wednesday Jan 8	Board Meeting	Noon	Joan Hogan's
Saturday Jan 11	Coffee & Conversation Topic TBA	10 - 12:00 PM	Penn Library
Saturday Jan 25	County League Day Health Care	10 - 2:00 PM	TBA
Sunday Jan 26	Unit Meeting Agricultural Study Consensus	2:30 - 4:30 PM	Vi lungerich's

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This Month's Co-Presidents' Message

As we enter the holiday season we hope all of you are including the League in your plans. The board is busy finalizing our plans for the Elected Officials' Party on November 15 and we hope to see many of you there. This event is being shared again with our local Chamber of Commerce. We are also looking forward to our annual fund raiser and theater party. Not least on the November calendar is local program planning on November 25. Please come and tell us of your interests.

We have been trying to work around the short release time for the agricultural study. Anyone who wishes to join the agricultural committee is more than welcome. Please call either **Arlene Block 310-541-7176** or **Judith Webb 310-833-5864**. We were very sorry that the fall County League Day, where we hoped to have a panel of agricultural experts, had to be canceled. Although we contacted a large variety of officials for this event we were unable to assemble enough experts to make up a panel. This means that we will have to find the time to educate ourselves about the many issues this study covers. Although it is "just" to update our current agriculture position, this study covers all the controversial issues affecting agriculture including genetic engineering and patents, climate change, federal funding, chemical exposure to pesticides etc. We will not get the consensus questions to help us focus on the consensus issues until December and the consensus will be in February since we need approval by the board early in March. We hope to have input in our consensus from all of you.

Our land committee continues to be active and had an interesting field trip to the controversial tanks. And we are starting to gear up for the state study on education. In January our County League Day will look at health care in light of all the changes.

We wish all of you a happy holiday season and renewed interest in participating with the League now and in the coming year.

Jo-Anne Waller and Vi Jungerich
Co-Presidents



Shanghai's Big Secret: Students Perform Well Because Their Teachers Are Well-Trained

By Pat Colby, Education Chair

Syndicated columnist Thomas L. Friedman travelled recently to a once low-performing elementary school in Shanghai to find that China's 30 year investment in education is reaping dividends. Friedman says when you meet with the principal and teachers, there is relentless focus on all the basics that we know make for high performing schools but are difficult to inculcate across an entire school system. These include a deep commitment to teacher training, peer-to-peer learning, constant professional development, deep involvement of parents in their children's learning, an insistence by the school's leadership on the highest standards and a culture that prizes education and respects teachers.

Teacher training works as follows: Teachers spend 70% of time teaching and 30% developing teaching skills and lesson planning. In a typical U.S. school teachers spend far less time organizing lessons and learning how to teach better. The Shanghai school begins at 8:35 a.m. and runs to 4:30 p.m. The English teacher, Mr. Teng, teaches only three 35 minute lessons, meticulously planned. The rest of his day is spent on lesson planning, training on-line or with his team, having other teachers watch his class and tell him how to improve and observing the classrooms of master teachers.

Friedman points out that education experts will tell you that of all the things that go into improving a school, nothing—not class size, not technology, not length of the school day—pays off more than giving teachers the time for peer review and constructive feedback, exposure to the best teaching and time to deepen their knowledge of what they're teaching. Mr. Teng said his job also includes "parent training." Parents come to the school three to five times a semester to develop computer skills so they can better help their kids with homework and follow lessons on line. And this is a school in which 40% of the students are children of poorly educated

migrant workers. In addition, teachers chat either by phone or online with parents of each student two or three times a week to keep them abreast of their children's progress.

In 2003, Shanghai had a very "average" school system. A decade later, it's leading the world and has dramatically decreased variability between schools. In the U.S. a majority of a teacher's time in school is spent teaching. In China's best schools far more time is spent learning from peers and personal development. As a result, in places like Shanghai, the system is good at attracting average people and getting enormous productivity out of them while also getting the best teachers in front of the most difficult classrooms.



Natural Resources

by Jack Sullivan LWV LACounty Natural Resources Director

National Recreation Area: A special resource study recommended that a National Recreation Area be created in the San Gabriel Mountains. The NRA would spread from Sierra Madre in the west to Claremont in the east and a portion would go down to the Puente Hills area. It would primarily be in the foothills area and not include the Angeles National Forest. Representative Judy Chu (27th District) is developing legislation to create this NRA.

If created, the NRA would allow for the protection and development of recreational opportunities in the NRA area and also protect the local watershed. The NRA will not alter any existing property or water rights but will allow the National Park Service (NPS) to work with local communities to create parks and hiking paths and increase environmental education about this region. In the mountains, the NPS could build facilities such as bathrooms, picnic areas and additional parking grounds.

LWV of Los Angeles County at a recent board meeting passed a motion in favor of this NPR. The motion reads as follows:

The LWV/LAC supports the National Park Service in establishing a National Recreation Area for the San Gabriel Mountains which would protect the watershed, assure preservation of plant and animal habitats and natural resources, provide well-managed recreational opportunities for residents, and cooperate with local communities in managing and where appropriate acquiring local parkland

LWC/LAC hopes, in cooperation with other local leagues, to provide input to Representative Chu's development of legislation for the NRA.

Water Tunnels: Debate continues about the construction of tunnels to divert water around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for more reliable export to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. The issues are complex and the debate revolves, in part, around two questions: will the tunnels harm the Delta further and who will pay for them? The current proposal has the beneficiaries of the tunnels (San Joaquin Agricultural interests and water rate payers in Southern California) paying for them while state bond funds would be used to restore the Delta. An EIR on the tunnels should be published soon and the debate will likely intensify.

For more information: On the proposed NRA: <http://chu.house.gov/content/san-gabriel-national-recreation-area-proposal-faq>

On the tunnels and water issues: <http://aquaforia.com/>

Unit Meeting Notice

All unit meetings are currently being held at the home of Vi Iungerich (violaiungerich@gmail.com)

28255 Trailriders Drive
RPV, CA 90275
310-541-5092

Sundays from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM

Date:	Topic:
11/24/13	Program Planning
01/26/14	Agriculture Study





What is Smart Voter?

What Is Your Role?

Smart Voter, the California League's premier online information service, has once again been providing voters with comprehensive coverage of local elections taking place across the Golden State on November 5th. Along with important contests for the leadership of cities, plus school and special districts, many California communities have important local measures on the ballot. Everyone is encouraged to publicize the availability of Smart Voter election coverage in your community, as well as use the resources yourself. Members can also assist by identifying useful non-partisan background material that can be added to the Smart Voter ballot lookup in your area.

Our July workshop on Smart Voter brought together those who were familiar with the website as well as several who witnessed its capabilities for the first time. It was inspiring for all to see the scope of information readily available to voters enabling them to make better decisions in our democratic process. We provide one-stop access to credible, reliable information 24/7 about local and smaller elections as well as major federal/state elections. The site also has extensive information about various issues relating to voting such as how to register, and personalized lookup about where to vote, and the candidates' qualifications and positions.

Lastly, remember to promote www.smartvoter.org to friends and neighbors as it enables voters to get the most comprehensive and accurate online election information covering local candidates as well. We are proud to financially support this service made available through our State League.

Linda Herman
Smart Voter Liaison

LWV of Palos Verdes Peninsula Launches It's New Website:

www.lwvpalosverdes.org

We are immensely proud to introduce our new website which was inaugurated two weeks ago. With the assistance of LWVC webmaster, Carol Watts, we have been able to incorporate a number of links that were difficult to previously include. Once on the site, you will be able to pull up the current calendar, information about elections, the history of the League, and other pertinent issues of importance.

There is still much to be done, such as adding our current and past Voters, bylaws and more local information of importance to our Palos Verdes members. With a little more time spent on learning the ins and outs of adding more items, those additions will be made.

We were most fortunate in previous years to benefit from PV on the Net which generously hosted our previous website at no charge to the League. Thanks are extended to **Betty Reidman** who handled the website on our behalf.

All of us in League would also like to extend our gratitude to **Toni Lubofsky**. Over many years, she has generously devoted her time and energy to gather our articles, creatively design the Voter, publish it, as well as make sure it is mailed out to members in a timely manner. Additionally, until recently, Toni also handled updating the voting information on the website. We are immensely appreciative of her many years of service to the Palos Verdes League.

Linda Herman & Katy Watkins
Webmasters

LWVUS Agricultural Study Update

In preparation for a complicated but fascinating study on agriculture, we would like to submit an interesting paper for your perusal and edification. There are many facets to this study; we suggest beginning with subjects already part of the public discussion; this paper reprinted starting in the next column, relates to the consensus questions being developed by the LWVUS (due out in December).

Perhaps the most thought provoking statement encountered in our reading to date, is from the article on organic food in the [April 25, 2012 edition of Scientific American](#) (see article in the next column): "Regardless, the world already produces 22 trillion calories annually via agriculture, enough to provide more than 3,000 calories to every person on the planet. The food problem is one of distribution and waste--whether the latter is food spoilage during harvest, in storage or even the purchase. According to the Grocery Manufacturers Association, in the U.S. alone, 215 meals per person go to waste annually." This information could influence the goal of producing more food to a focus on how the world should concentrate the distribution of food, with emphasis on the production of local, sustainable products.

Please read this paper, and contact either of us if you're interested in more, perhaps specific, information through other papers.

Arlene Block and Judith Webb
Co-Chairs, Agriculture Study, LWV-PVP



Will Organic Food Fail to Feed the World? By [David Biello](#) [Scientific American, April 25, 2012](#)

A new meta-analysis suggests farmers should take a hybrid approach to producing enough food for humans while preserving the environment

But the end result is a healthier soil, which may prove vital in efforts to make it more resilient in the face of climate change as well as conserve it. Organic soils, for example, retain water better than those farms that employ conventional methods. "You use a lot more water [in irrigation] because the soil doesn't have the capacity to retrain the water you use," noted farmer Fred Kirschenmann, president of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture at the "[Feeding the World While the Earth Cooks](#)" event at the New America Foundation in Washington, D.C., on April 12.

At the same time, a still-growing human population requires more food, which has led some to propose further intensifying conventional methods of applying fertilizer and pesticides to specially bred crops, enabling either a second Green Revolution or improved yields from farmlands currently under cultivation. Crops genetically modified to endure drought may also play a role as well as efforts to develop perennial versions of annual staple crops, such as wheat, which could help reduce environmental impacts and improve soil. "Increasing salt, drought or heat tolerance of our existing crops can move them a little but not a lot," said biologist Nina Fedoroff of Pennsylvania State University at the New America event. "That won't be enough."

And breeding new perennial versions of staple crops would require compressing millennia of crop improvements that resulted in the high-yielding wheat varieties of today, such as the dwarf wheat created by breeder Norman Borlaug and his colleagues in the 1950s, into a

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Organic Food Article continued from page 6

span of years while changing the fundamental character of wheat from an annual crop to a perennial one. Then there is the profit motive. "The private sector is not likely to embrace an idea like perennial crop seeds, which do not require the continued purchase of seeds and thus do not provide a very good source of profit," Seufert notes.

Regardless, the world already produces 22 trillion calories annually via agriculture, enough to provide more than 3,000 calories to every person on the planet. The food problem is one of distribution and waste—whether the latter is food spoilage during harvest, in storage or even after purchase. According to the Grocery Manufacturers Association, in the U.S. alone, 215 meals per person go to waste annually. "Since the world already produces more than enough food to feed everyone well, there are other important considerations" besides yield, argues ecologist Catherine Badgley of the University of Michigan, who also compared yields from organic and conventional methods in a 2006 study that found similar results. Those range from environmental impacts of various practices to the number of people employed in farming. As it stands, conventional agriculture relies on cheap energy, cheap labor and other unsustainable practices. "Anyone who thinks we will be using Roundup [a herbicide] in eight [thousand] to 10,000 years is foolish," argued organic evangelist Jeff Moyer, farm director the Rodale Institute, at the New America Foundation event.

But there is unlikely to be a simple solution. Instead the best farming practices will vary from crop to crop and place to place. Building healthier soils, however, will be key everywhere. "Current conventional agriculture is one of the major threats to the environment and degrades the very natural resources it depends on. We thus need to change the way we produce our food," Seufert argues. "Given the current precarious situation of agriculture, we should assess many alternative management systems, including conventional, organic, other agro-ecological and possibly hybrid systems to identify the best options to improve the way we produce our food."

Candidate Forums 2013

In October, the PV League conducted forums for candidates running for the Rancho Palos Verdes and the Rolling Hills Estates city councils.

The RPV forum had 3 candidates – two incumbents and one challenger – for 2 open seats. The forum was held in the community room at Hesse Park. President **Jo-Anne Waller** welcomed audience members. **Linda Herman** served as moderator. **Terry Arnush** was our timer, **Judith Webb** and **Diana Halderman** collected written questions from the audience, and **Nancy Mahr** and **Jo-Anne Waller** reviewed submitted questions. After each candidate gave his introductory remarks, a question posed by the League was asked. Following that, the candidates responded to questions from the audience. About 40 people attended the forum, which ran from 7 to 9 p.m. The event was video taped by the RPV video team and aired on RPV cable TV.

The RHE forum was held in the City Council chambers at the RHE City Hall. There were four candidates for 2 open seats – one was an incumbent. Again **Jo-Anne Waller** welcomed the audience. **Mary Ellen Barnes** was the moderator; **Nell Mirels** was the timer; **Katy Watkins** collected written questions; **Nancy Mahr** and **Jo-Anne Waller** reviewed questions. The League again presented the first question to the candidates after they had completed their opening remarks. Written questions from the audience followed. The audience was small, with only 12 people attending. This resulted in fewer questions and a shorter forum, running from 7 to 8 p.m. Videographer Gregg Perkins taped the event. It was aired on Cox cable. All of the candidates were articulate and polite. The audience submitted some excellent questions and the candidates all responded. Prospective voters received some good information from the candidates and were given a chance to see these candidates in action.

Nancy Mahr
Voter Service Director



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:

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

Please make checks payable to *LWW 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.

LWW PVP Officers and Board Member Contact Information:

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