

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

President's
Message

ON JULY 21, THE LA COUNTY LEAGUE held its annual League Day "Popovers in Pasadena." For those unfamiliar, the event takes place at the Women's City Club in Pasadena, where the specialty on the menu is popovers. They are divine.

The main topic was immigration, and a workshop was offered on the effects of immigration on local communities. I was offered the opportunity to speak to the group on how immigration affects Burbank. The Burbank Day Labor Center at the Home Depot came up as at topic. You may remember that controversy arose in 2006 when a new Home Depot was built in Burbank that included a Day Labor center.

To do our research, Glendale/Burbank member **Tom Carson**, Los Angeles member **Debbie Cantanese** and I interviewed **Burbank Mayor Marsha Ramos**, who was on the City Council at the time of the controversy. We interviewed Juan Rodriguez, Program Coordinator for the Day Labor Center, which is run by Catholic Charities. I also looked at City Council Meeting Minutes, and contemporaneous newspaper accounts.

I prepared a 10 minute presentation, an outline of which is included in this issue of the Voter. It was an exciting and challenging project, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be involved.

Speaking of being involved, **I encourage you to join us on August 25 for our Voter Service Retreat.** We have three elections coming up in the next year, and we will need all our resources to serve the communities of Glendale and Burbank. We will do voter registration, pro/con forums, candidate forums distribute voter materials and whatever else needs to be done. We need all hands on deck to formulate our plans!

Monica Marquez

**August
2007
Calendar**

Saturday
August 11

Burbank Toxic Roundup
Burbank Fire Training Center
1845 N Ontario
Burbank
See page 8

Saturday
August 25

**Voter Service
Planning Retreat**
See flyer on page 3

Saturday
September 29

**LWV/LAC Training for
Candidates Forums**

Election Calendar 2008

Source: www.easyvoter.org

WHEN WILL we be voting next year and what will be on the ballot? A summary of what to expect appears below:

February 5, 2008 Presidential Primary—Select candidates for President from each political party plus vote on state ballot measures.

June 3, 2008 “Regular” Primary Election—Choose candidates from each political party for U.S.

Congress and the state legislature and vote on state ballot measures (plus local candidates and measures depending on where you live).

November 4, 2008 General Election—Choose a President and other elected representatives plus vote on state and local ballot measures.

Voter Resources

THE LEAGUE offers many resources for voters, including several online tools, which are described below:

www.VOTE411.org

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, there is the VOTE411.org web site. Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a “one-stop-shop” for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on the following aspects of the election process:

- Absentee ballot information
- Ballot measure information (where applicable)
- Early voting options (where applicable)
- Election dates
- Factual data on candidates in various federal, state and local races
- General information on such topics as how to watch debates with a critical eye
- ID requirements
- Polling place locations
- Registration deadlines
- Voter qualifications
- Voter registration forms

An important component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their address and retrieve the poll location for the voting precinct in which that address is located. The League has found that this is among the most sought after information in the immediate days leading up to, and on, Election Day.



www.EASYVOTER.ORG

SPONSORED IN PART BY the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund. Easy Voter is geared to first time voters and voters for whom English is not their first language. The web site can be viewed in other languages, specifically Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese. Information includes how to vote and how to identify the elected officials who represent you. The League also produces the *Easy Voter Guide* for our statewide elections, which can be viewed online in English and other languages. Printed copies of this publication have also been available to the public free of charge in English and other languages.

www.SMARTVOTER.ORG

THIS SITE is produced by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund to achieve the following goals:

- Provide voters with comprehensive nonpartisan information about the contests on their ballot in an easy-to-use presentation.
- Provide a means for candidates to publish information about themselves and their candidacy directly to voters.

The Smart Voter site allows users to find their custom ballot and polling place by entering their street address and zip code. Users may access “home pages” of each participating candidate that include their biography, endorsements, top priorities if elected, and position papers. All candidates in the participating counties are invited to participate. Each page about a contest includes links to relevant news or analysis articles written by online local media organizations or other nonpartisan information.

The LWV Glendale/Burbank assists with Smart Voter by sending letters to local candidates asking them to send in their information.



Voter Service Retreat

Saturday
August 25
9:30-2 pm
Lunch provided
Community Room
Glendale Fire Station 21
421 Oak Street

(across the street from the Glendale Galleria)



RSVP to Monica Marquez by either email mmarquz47@earthlink.net
by phone (818) 760-3667
or by regular mail using the tearoff below.



RSVP by August 23

Please mail to: Monica Marquez
6300 Whitsett Ave. #1
North Hollywood CA 91606

Name(s) _____



Phone _____

Élections à la Française (Part I)

Sally Rivera, League of Women Voters of Whittier

Sally Rivera served as an international observer in the French elections earlier this year. She has written an article describing her experiences. Part I appears in this issue of the Voter.

Part II will appear in the September Voter.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS was aimed at France during the recent French national elections. The presidential elections were held on April 22 and May 6, followed by the legislative elections on June 10 and 17. A second round is always held if no candidate wins a simple majority in the first round. Visiting France during both cycles, I was able to witness the transition process from close range. Although most of my electoral exposure, including visitation of numerous polling stations, was in Paris, I also observed at a rural polling site in southeastern France for the first round of the legislative elections. As a League member, frequent Los Angeles County poll worker and all-my-life adherent of civic engagement, I was almost automatically analyzing the similarities and contrasts of the election process.

A striking contrast of the always-on-Sunday elections was the simplicity of the ballot: voters were asked to vote for only one office. The April 22 election asked voters to choose one of 12 candidates for president. With a stunning turnout of 83.77 percent and no candidate winning a simple majority, the field was whittled to two candidates for the May 6 runoff: Nicolas Sarkozy of the center-right Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) and Ségolène Royal of the Parti Socialiste (PS). Royal was the first-ever woman to compete in the French presidential runoff. The runoff was marked by an even greater turnout: 37,342,004 voters, representing 83.97 percent of those registered. Again the only item to be voted on was the choosing of the president. With 53.06 percent of the vote, Nicolas Sarkozy became the sixth president of the Fifth Republic. His inaugural was on May 16.

THE TOTAL NUMBER of bureaux de vote (polling stations) was reported as 64,000. In Paris each arrondissement (20 geographic divisions of the city with widely differing populations) is responsible for overseeing polling stations. The number of polling stations is based on population, with each Parisian station responsible for approximately 1,500-1,800 voters. A representative contrast is the 14 polling stations in the 4th arrondissement and 65 stations in the 20th. Polling stations are public buildings - usually city halls and schools - marked by the French flag (almost always) and elections signage, including a list

of all jurisdictional polling stations with corresponding residence listings and official posters for each candidate presented in an approved, numbered sequence. For the April 22 election, the Constitutional Council, following a drawing, designated number 1 for Olivier Besancenot of the Trotskyite Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire; number 4 for third-place winner François Bayrou of the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF); number 8 for Royal; and number 12 for Sarkozy. The identical 1-12 sequence was displayed in every electoral jurisdiction. For the presidential runoff, Sarkozy was number 1 and Royal was number 2. Similar drawings were done for the legislative elections cycle so that poster display was uniform.

THE ELIGIBLE VOTER is at least 18 at the time of the election, a French citizen and registered. Registration for the 2007 elections closed December 31, 2006, months before the first election and in strong contrast to California's 15 days before the next scheduled election. Registration information is basic. Political party affiliation is not requested and there are no language options. French is the sole language, which is in strong contrast with the mandate on Los Angeles County to offer materials in seven languages. The successfully registered voter will receive a carte électorale that confirms registration information, assigns a voter number, designates polling location and lists upcoming elections.

Although polling stations are overseen by the local jurisdiction, they are staffed by both municipal employees and partisan representatives. Reception and ballot issuance are administered by government workers; the ballot box (typically a large transparent bowl secured by locks) and rosters are overseen by partisans—a striking departure from California staffing. As far as I could determine, transparency and checks-and-balances procedures were strongly in place and all workers were attentive to impartial elections administration. Visitations by both jurisdiction officials and other partisan representatives were common. Unforeseen problems were resolved quickly. The polling station atmosphere was cordial, even with very long lines during the presidential cycle.

ELECTIONS A LA FRANCAISE continued on page 7

The Story of the Burbank Day Labor Center

Excerpts of presentation given at the LWV/Los Angeles County League Day, July 21, 2007 by Monica Marquez

MY FIRST THOUGHT when I think of the day labor issue is Emma Lazarus's poem on the base of the statue of liberty: **"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . . send these, the homeless tempest tossed to me. . . . I lift my lamp beside the golden door."** It's an amazingly generous sentiment, but then one must get down to the practicalities involved. How many people does that really mean? Maybe we're full. Do we already have far more people than we can manage? Have we taken in far more people than our laws permit?

Just asking the questions can make one uneasy. Does even asking the question if we have too many immigrants mean one lacks compassion? Does a conviction that America is not equipped to handle the masses of immigrants mean one is ethnocentric?

For the workers, day labor is about survival. It's about earning money for food and shelter. But if the workers are here without authorization, their working violates the law. It's easy to see why sentiment runs so deeply on both sides of the issue.

That's why the League's study of immigration is so important. The immigration debate has been polarized, with each side accusing the other of ill motives, of skewing the statistics, and even of being Un American. What the League is doing here is giving a calm voice to these issues, examining them thoroughly, looking at all sides, but without hurling invectives at people who may not agree with our point of view. I am pleased to

have an opportunity to be part of the process.

I'd like to share my own experience with day laborers. Several years ago, there was a Home Depot in my neighborhood in North Hollywood, and I was an early riser and an enterprising do it yourselfer. There were dozens of men in the parking lot and on the sidewalk surrounding the Home Depot. As my car hit the sidewalk separating the street from the parking lot, men rushed up to both sides of my car asking me if I needed their help. It was disconcerting—and a little scary. I was nervous about having so many strangers at my car windows, and I was afraid I was going to hit one of them on my way out.

Just recently, I drove down Oxnard Street in North Hollywood. That portion Oxnard is an industrial street, with a lot of building supply places and carpet stores. Dozens of Hispanic men were gathered on the sidewalks for several blocks. Some were lying down, hats over their faces, snoozing. A few were leaning against the buildings, arms folded. Many were just sitting on the curb. There are no restaurants there, no restrooms, and no shade. But what I assume there is work. At least on a consistent enough basis to draw them back, day after day.

It is against this backdrop that I want to talk about how the day labor issue has affected the City of Burbank. When we were offered the opportunity to research how immigration has affected our local communities, the Burbank day labor center immediately came to mind.

Outline of a Presentation Given at the LWV/Los Angeles County League Day, July 21, 2007 by Monica Marquez

DAY LABOR AND THE IMMIGRATION debate are inextricably tied together, because the impression exists that day laborers tend to be undocumented immigrants not authorized to work in the United States.

- Opponents say studies show day laborers tend to be undocumented immigrants
- Proponents say studies show day laborers may or may not be undocumented immigrants
- Both sides accuse the other of skewing the statistics

Groups of young men, standing around in highly visible public places for long periods of time, may be regarded as a nuisance, a threat to public health and safety, or inconsistent with the kind of community image many residents want.

- Day laborers on the sidewalks have no access to food, trash cans and restroom facilities.
- Day laborers may rush cars leaving home improvement stores, scaring the occupants of the cars and putting the laborers in danger of being hit.

OUTLINE continued on page 6

Conservation Corner

Plastic Bags: Just BYOBs

Source: Burbank Public Works Bulletin
(Summer 2007)

A NEW STATE LAW WENT into effect in July in California. Supermarkets and chain drug stores must recycle plastic bags, **place a collection bin inside the store premises**, implement a public education program and sell reusable bags. The collection bins may not be easy to find, so ask.

Unfortunately, there are problems in relying solely on the recycling of the bags to reduce their negative environmental impact. Less than 6% of the bags are recycled nationwide. Sorting and contamination cause inefficiencies that make the economics of recycling the bags less attractive. The bags are being shipped to third world countries for incineration where environmental laws may be more lax. Oil and toxic chemicals are used to manufacture the bags.

The next time you go to the store, BYOBs (bring your own bags). Use extra tote bags that you have received at conferences. Large stores such as Ikea, Target and Trader Joe's are selling reusable bags.

Do you have any conservation tips to share? If so, e-mail them to linda1106@sbcglobal.net.

OUTLINE continued from page 5

The Home Depot sought to build a store in Burbank, California.

- They invested millions in cleaning up a contaminated site.
- Neighboring businesses and residents expressed concern over the prospects of day laborers.
- In response to those concerns, the City asked the Home Depot to construct a day labor center, and the Home Depot agreed.
- The Home Depot constructed the store and center, then conveyed the center to the City of Burbank, along with a \$94,000 payment to cover the center's cost of operations.

Catholic Charities, a non profit organization, was contracted to run the day labor center.

- Catholic Charities operates a day labor center in Glendale, California, next door.
- They also run a service center in Glendale that provides services to the poor.

At the City Council meeting on January 16, 2006, the Burbank City Council gave its final approval.

- Home Depot would pay \$94,000 annually to the City as a public safety fee.
- That money would be immediately turned over to Catholic Charities to run the center.

Opposition to the Burbank Day Labor Center was strong and national.

- CNN's Lou Dobbs opposed the center on his national television show.
- KFI radio in Los Angeles referred to the center as a "Day Labor Lounge."
- The center was protested by the Minutemen and members of Save our State.
- There were counter protesters, with noisy exchanges.

The Center's operations are overseen by Catholic Charities.

- The center is open from 6 am to 3 pm daily except Christmas.
- An average of 38 workers a day come to the center. Of those, 85% find work.
- Workers make an average of \$10.54 per hour.
- Workers are divided by skills, such as plumbers, painters, and unskilled.
- Unskilled workers are given tickets. Their names are selected by lottery.
- Employers, generally contractors and homeowners, drive into the center and speak with a supervisor. Workers do not speak to the employers directly at first, to avoid storming of cars.
- Workers sign a contract with guidelines, including no drinking, gambling, etc.
- Workers must be respectful.
- If workers have time, they are asked to do community work such as picking up trash or helping at the Glendale Service Center.
- The center has restrooms and vending machines.
- There is no food service, but catering trucks come by 3 to 4 times per day.

Protests in Burbank have died down.

- There have been no protests in 2007.

The day labor issue is still an important national issue.

- In June, 2007, Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia) sought an amendment to the immigration bill that would prohibit municipalities from requiring home improvement stores to pay for shelters or other services to help maintain orderly day labor sites.
- In Mountain View, California, the Home Depot has agreed to give the city of Mountain View \$250,000 for a new day labor center.

ARRIVING AT THE POLLING STATION on April 22, the voter saw twelve stacks of index-size cards (approximately 6 inches by 4 inches) with the names of presidential candidates displayed on the reception table. Each stack was placed in the 1-12 order designated by the Constitutional Council. The voter picked up as few as two or as many as 12 cards along with one small envelope before proceeding to the voting booth. The standard protocol for all elections is that the voter then selects one card and folds it to fit into the envelope. Decision-making was clearly in advance of voting because typical voting booth turnaround was seconds. Unused cards can be discarded or kept by the voter. The voter then approaches the ballot box to cast the "ballot." The ballot box clerk accepts the voter's carte électorale and a photo identification card. The ballot clerk calls the number and name of the voter. In larger jurisdictions the roster is alphabetically split, similar to Los Angeles County. The roster clerk quickly finds the voter in the roster with a standard-issue modified ruler featuring a midsection transparency. The roster clerk repeats the voter's name, the ballot clerk opens the slit to allow the voter to insert the envelope, and then the ballot clerk closes the slit and ritualistically completes the statement started by the roster clerk's repetition of the voter's name by saying "a voté" (has voted). The voter then proceeds to the roster and signs in the signature block carved out of the ruler transparency, retrieves the date-stamped

carte électorale and identification card, and then leaves. (I was able to obtain a sample of the ruler and have shown it to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's office. A modified version is being considered for use here.

AFTER RECONCILING THE ROSTER with envelopes, all counting of ballots is done at the polls by voters who have been recruited as volunteers throughout the day. Qualifications are being a registered voter and willing to do the task. Typically 20 volunteers are equally divided among five tables. Training with required forms is performed by a municipal clerk, usually taking no more than 15 minutes. Tables receive unopened ballot envelopes that have been evenly divided. The group assigns tasks, opens envelopes, records votes and verifies totals (during my April 22 observation, I saw only one group using a calculator). Signatures of each group member and poll workers are required on each official tally sheet. Nullified ballots (examples: ballots for two candidates found in an envelope, writing on the ballot, non-candidate card in an envelope) are retained with the tally reconciliation sheet. Once all have certified that the totals are correct, all non-disputed ballots are thrown away! All tally sheets are delivered to elections headquarters as official records. Also delivered are brown paper bags filled with discarded ballots destined for paper recycling. Election results are announced before midnight.



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All Citizens of voting age are welcome. Associate Membership is open to all others.

YES! I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters as part of your voice for citizens and force for change. I enclose: (please check one or more of the following)

- \$60.00 for a one-year individual membership
(includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$100.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address
(includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Name/Names _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

I would like to receive my VOTER by email.

My email address is _____

Make check payable to League of Women Voters. Mail to Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank CA 91504

Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.

The Voter

THE VOTER IS PUBLISHED nine times a year by the League of Women Voter of Glendale/Burbank, California.

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The **League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education advocacy.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

Burbank Toxic Roundup

August 11
Burbank Fire Training Center
1845 N. Ontario
Burbank



Bring your household hazardous waste to this location for safe disposal. (Open to all Los Angeles County residents.) More information on the internet at www.888cleanLa.com or call 1-888-CleanLA

249 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203
Corner of Brand/Calif.
tel: 818.244.4448
fax: 818.244.4795
M-F 8:30-6, Sat. 10-4
1125 E. Broadway
Glendale, CA 91205
Btwn Chevy Chase/Adams
tel: 818.242.4270
fax: 818.242.0525
M-F 8:30-6:30
Sat. 10-4, Sun. 12-4



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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
BURBANK/GLENDALE

VOTER

7714 Via Capri
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(818) 247-2407

League websites:
LWV Glendale/Burbank
<http://www.gb.ca.lwvnet.org>

LWV California
<http://www.ca.LWV.org>

LWV United States
<http://www.LWV.org>

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