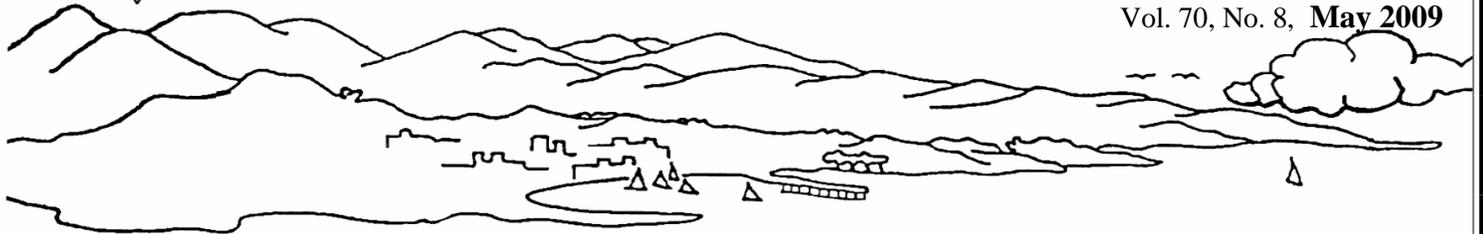


Channel **VOTER**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Serving South Santa Barbara County

Vol. 70, No. 8, May 2009



League Phone/Fax: 965-2422

Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>

MAY COMMUNITY FORUM A CRITICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

Wednesday, May 20, 2009, 12:00 to 2 p.m.

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Channel Voter Editor
Anne Heck (2009)

At this writing, the 111th Congress is now turning its attention to President Obama's charge to address "real" health care legislation as a top priority. To help bring our League members up to date, we have invited the following three speakers to our May Community Forum: to cover the state of play of health care reform in Washington, D.C., a **representative from the district office of Congresswoman Lois Capps**, who is strategically placed on the House Commerce Committee on Energy and Commerce; to inform us on California health care proposals, **Peter Conn** of Health Care for All – California; and to relate these measures to League health care positions, **Doris Nelson**,

from the Los Angeles League, who is a member of the LWVUS Task Force on Health Care Reform.

On page 5 you will find a recent message to Leaguers from LWVUS President, Mary Wilson. For LWVUS reports and action recommendations on Health Care Reform, please look for "Health Care" on the League website: <http://www.lwv.org>.

Abundant parking is available, and refreshments are served to augment your brown bag lunch.

Carole Marks, Health Care

MAY DISCUSSION UNITS – THE BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

The May discussion units will be devoted to the measures on the May 19 ballot. We'll explain the League's recommendations on the propositions, and discuss the budget crisis that brought us to this point. See pages 2 and 3 for related articles, as well as the flyer, which we hope you'll read and pass along to your friends. These special election measures are confusing to almost everyone! So, to help clear the fog, check the calendar on the back page for a unit meeting at a time and place convenient for you.

Linda Phillips, President

LAST CALL FOR CONVENTION!

LWVC's state Convention will be in Long Beach, May 15-17, with pre-convention activities on May 14. You can still sign up to go, and we may even have some delegate slots available. Call Carole Marks or me for information. This is always one of the highlights of my year. It's heaven for League policy wonks. Please join us there!

-Linda Phillips, President

Once again we are in the midst of an election campaign - this time a May 19 special election with a package of propositions related to the state budget. There are no local elections in Santa Barbara County - only Propositions 1A through 1F.

And once again, our League is both providing "no-spin", non-partisan information (Voters Service), and making recommendations (advocacy). You can read about our Voters Service activities elsewhere in this *Voter*. I'll be talking about our advocacy here.

Please help us get the word out that the League is taking a strong position **opposing** four of the propositions: 1A, 1C, 1D, and 1E. This state League press release tells us why:

"We oppose these measures because they are NOT the solution to our long term financial crisis, with the continuing structural deficit in the state budget and flawed budget process," said Janis R. Hirohama, president of the League of Women Voters of California. "We make this decision with regret. We would support real reform to make the state budget process more accountable and give the Legislature and Governor effective tools to advance state priorities. However, these hurriedly drafted propositions, produced at the end of a flawed process that kept both the public and most legislators in the dark, will only make our fiscal situation worse."

Proposition 1A is touted by its proponents as the way to bring stability to the budget process. But what it will *really* do is tie the hands of the Legislature and Governor as they face changing needs for state and local government services. It will keep them from taking into account the state's changing demographics and growth in the actual cost of important services like health care.

"Although some claim there is an urgency to pass Prop. 1A to resolve our state's budget problems, we disagree," said Hirohama. "Most of its provisions will not take effect for two years—two years that we should spend hammering out *real* solutions to our budget and fiscal challenges."

The League believes elected officials should be allowed to carry out their responsibilities with flexibility. Years of "ballot-box budgeting" and formulas for auto-pilot spending have greatly eroded that flexibility. Prop. 1A, however, adds to the problem. For example, it dictates how half the funds that must be transferred to the "Budget Stabilization Fund" are to be used; it removes the Governor's ability to suspend transfers to the fund in difficult years; and it imposes new formulas for calculating "unanticipated revenues" and specifies how they can be used in good years. And, after the deep cuts made during these strapped times, it could lock in a reduced level of services by failing to properly take account



of increased caseloads and program costs.

If Prop. 1A passes, the Governor would be given new power to make mid-year cuts and suspend COLAs in state programs without legislative oversight. The League believes that midyear budget adjustments should require joint action of the legislative and executive branches so that checks and balances are maintained.

Proposition 1C. This proposal attempts to raise money for the short term by selling bonds that would be paid off by future lottery revenue. In light of California's poor credit rating and the state of the economy, those bonds would have to be sold at very unfavorable interest rates, if they can be sold at all. The Legislative Analyst says that in the long term, lottery profits probably would not be enough to cover the higher payments to education required by Prop. 1C. We criticized this proposal as irresponsible last fall, and if anything, that criticism applies more than ever now.

Propositions 1D and 1E. On May 19, voters will also be asked to approve the temporary taking of funds from early childhood and mental health programs that were established by two previous initiatives. These are illusory, stopgap measures, and the League opposes these propositions as part of this objectionable package. It is ironic that these initiatives, which did what many consider "the right thing" by providing a source of funding, now face reductions.

The League is neutral on **Proposition 1B.** State responsibility for the funding of public education is essential, and we appreciate the need to pay back the devastating cuts that our schools and community colleges have sustained. On the other hand, the Legislature will have the ability to restore school funding without Prop. 1B, and it is not needed in this package of propositions.

Since the League has no position on setting salaries for public officials, we take no position on **Proposition 1F**, which would prevent pay raises for legislators and statewide constitutional officers during budget deficit years. The League of Women Voters recognizes that California is facing the worst budget crisis in its history, with the worldwide recession severely affecting state revenues and the need for state services. Moreover, our budget system is broken and in desperate need of reform. This year illustrates the need to abandon the two-thirds vote requirement for passing budgets and raising revenues, and we must also look at other budget reforms. In the meantime, a new tax commission is considering ways to broaden or stabilize our revenues. "There is much that needs to be done," Hirohama stated, "but we are certain that the propositions on the May 19 ballot are not the answer."

Linda Phillips, President

LOCAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSITIONS 1D AND 1E

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors has come out against Propositions 1D and 1E because they would adversely affect county programs to assist children in their first five years of life (Prop. 1D) and those suffering from mental illness (Prop. 1E). The California League is also opposing these measures. Here is some more information about how passage of these measures would affect us locally.

PROPOSITION 1D

Proposition 1D would change the allocation and administration of Proposition 10 (First 5) tobacco tax revenues, which go to First 5 California, First 5 Santa Barbara County, and the other 57 counties' First 5 commissions. If passed, Proposition 1D would do the following:

- Redirect \$268 million annually from First 5 county commissions to the state General Fund for five years; the five-year total of \$1.6 billion would not be repaid
- Take more than 50% of First 5 revenues – possibly 65% or 70% by the fourth and fifth years
- Give the Legislature complete authority over how to spend the redirected First 5 revenues

First 5 Santa Barbara County currently receives approximately \$5 million per year from Proposition 10 funds; additional public and private partnerships increase the overall budget to \$7.6 million. These funds are allocated to comprehensive services for young children throughout our county. The initial 50% decrease in Prop 10 revenue would be over \$2.5 million a year to Santa Barbara County (\$12.6 million over five years), which would significantly impact existing programs and the ability to draw more funding through matching state, federal, and private grants.

In addition, First 5 Santa Barbara County now receives more than \$800,000 from First 5 California for targeted initiatives such as School Readiness, Children's Health Insurance premiums, and Child Care Workforce Develop-

ment. Proposition 1D would eliminate State First 5 funding reserve balances and redirect these funds to the state's General Fund, significantly impacting future funding for these initiatives in Santa Barbara County.

Hanne Sonquist, League Member & former First Five Commissioner

PROPOSITION 1E

Proposition 1E would redirect about \$230 million a year from the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) to the state General Fund to replace state funding of existing programs. This raid of existing programs to create temporary "savings" makes less money available for services. It may even result in the loss of federal matching funds.

The Santa Barbara South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee opposes Proposition 1E because they believe money should not be taken from Proposition 63 programs that are working. Programs that are designed to reduce incarceration, homelessness and emergency room visits are good public policy.

The Santa Barbara Consumer Advocacy Coalition (CAC), a group that advocates for individuals with mental illness in Santa Barbara County, is actively opposing Proposition 1E because of negative impacts on mental health consumers. Roger Thompson, the Executive Director of the Coalition, believes that "The costs of untreated mental illness are higher across the board. People who never get care, or who lose their care, will drop out of school, lose their jobs and homes, and cost us more in hospitalizations, homelessness, and criminal justice."

The League of Women Voters of California and local community groups oppose this short-sighted measure and urge you to vote no on 1E. To learn more about what is going on locally visit the Santa Barbara Consumer Advocacy Coalition website: www.joincac.org. To learn more about the situation statewide and see LWVC's analysis of 1E, see www.lwvc.org.

Emily Allen, LWVSB Consultant, Mental Health/Homelessness

GOLETA GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS CONTINUE TO CREATE PROBLEMS

At the present time the City of Goleta is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on a large number of major amendments to the city's General Plan called Track 3. These are complex issues, the most serious that remain out of about 200 originally proposed amendments. They will effect changes in the placing of big box stores, the Goleta Growth Management Ordinance, traffic subsidies, and public beach accesses. In March the League expressed concern about many of those changes. That EIR on the Track 3 Amendments is expected to be released this summer.

Meanwhile, the Bacara Resort has asked the city to begin a separate new EIR on a proposed addition to the hotel, and they include 12 General Plan Amendments for that one project! These Amendments are already being considered in the Track 3 EIR. At a hearing on April 9, the League asked the City of Goleta to stop processing the new Bacara request

until the Track 3 General Plan Amendments are analyzed in the earlier EIR and reviewed by the public.

One of our concerns is that the Bacara is proposing to build 55 large new units around the present public access to the beach. The existing access was a required mitigation for the building of the Bacara. The hotel proposes to put a new public access at the far eastern end of the property, overlooking the Venoco processing plant, and give the current excellent access to their private owners of the new units. We don't believe that the new access will be as good as the present one, and have asked them to retain the present site for its dedicated use. We think that the California Coastal Commission will consider this very seriously.

Connie Hannah, Sustainable Communities Committee Chair

ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY SET FOR MAY 9

Our Annual Garden Party, to be held on Saturday, May 9, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., will honor three of our most dedicated members, Anne and Tom Heck and Herb Linville, who have given their talents and energy to serve the League and this community in a multitude of ways.

We are especially grateful to Toni and Tom Schultheis for offering the exquisite gardens of their home (even while the interior is still under repair from severe smoke damage from an accidental fire). *Robledal* is a grand and beautiful oak studded estate, built by renowned architect, George Washington Smith, and is one of three original estates built in the 1920s by Hope Ranch's founding partners.



As this is our major fundraising activity of the year, we encourage all League members to come with guests and enjoy a lovely time together with old and new friends. We will meander through the rose gardens, sip cool refreshments under the wisteria pergola, and listen to the music of our talented honoree, Tom Heck. Elected officials have been invited to make presentations. Yes, we are looking forward to a delightful afternoon!

Carole Marks, Administrative Vice President

A SIMPLE HISTORY OF THE SANTA BARBARA LEAGUE'S "CHANNEL VOTER"

This year's Garden Party on May 9 is featuring League members to whom we are indebted for their roles in producing our League newsletter, the *Channel Voter*. Over the years there have been many Channel Voter Editors: in the last decade, Anne Heck, Deborah Slaght, Marlene Neushul, and Connie Hannah. The most recent is our retiring editor, Anne Heck, who, for the past 6 years, has been the outstanding and graciously patient editor, while Tom Heck has contributed high quality photography for its pages, and Herb Linville for 18 years has been the steady driving force behind its delivery by heading up the Mailing Team. At the Garden Party we will express our appreciation to them and acknowledge all of those who have participated over the years operating behind the scenes with the *Channel Voter*.

If communication is the basis of civil society, the League of Women Voters carries that effort through our *National Voter*, the *California Voter* and our own local monthly newsletter, the *Channel Voter*. The *Voters* keep members informed of the work and progress of League at every level. A dedicated volunteer group has written, printed, addressed and mailed our local newsletter 8 times a year – making sure we all stay connected with our purposes and each other.

1950 The first regular bulletin of the League began around this time, and it was named the *Channel Voter* in 1957.

1965 President Billie Kendrick made it a first order of business to update the *Channel Voter*, winning praise from both the state and national Leagues for commissioning a local artist to design a mountains-to-the-ocean design for our front page.

1971 League news was laboriously mimeographed by a committee -- sharing one office stapler.

1975 President Virginia Robinson noted how a donated

electric upgrade of the dreaded manual Gestetner mimeograph machine first delighted and then dismayed when the machine showed a habit of spraying ink as it printed.

1982 The front page banner was somewhat revised and the *Voter* went to offset printing under the leadership of Barbara Plummer.

1987-91 During this time, two working women, Roberta Gilman and Wendy Borst, agreed to do the word-processing for the *Voter*. It proved to be too hard with full time jobs so the *Voter* went to a professional processor for several years.

1996 As the League's professional processor was leaving town, her intensive search for a qualified replacement led us to Gloria Garcia of Wordesigns. We have worked with Gloria ever since, and she is the consummate professional!

2004 This is the year that the *Voter* was added to our website, <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>. The first webmaster was Dawn Kirchner, followed by Leslie Alexander, and currently Stacy Shepherd.

Connie Hannah, 1st Vice-President

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LWVUS PRESIDENT'S LETTER ABOUT HEALTH CARE

Leaders Update, April 2, 2009

Dear Leaguers,

Passage of comprehensive health care reform is a major priority for the League of Women Voters of the United States in the 111th Congress, and we look forward to working with Leagues to pass meaningful health care reform. For the next few weeks, the LWVUS Lobby Corps will be lobbying all 100 Senate offices in support of comprehensive health care reform legislation. We have also sent out an action alert in support of the President's budget, which contains essential funding for health care reform.

The League of Women Voters is urging Senators to draft legislation that guarantees quality, affordable health care to all U.S. residents, including the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary, acute and long-term care, mental health care, and prescription drug coverage, as well as allowing for pre-existing conditions; establishes a system-wide program to coordinate information, establishes best practices and provides consumers the information they need to protect themselves and their families; and provides effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services, and allows for efficient and economical delivery of care.

The League is working closely with our allies on Capitol Hill and coalition partners to set and implement legislative strategies that will ensure that we achieve the key goals of the LWVUS health care position. We need to carefully consider our options and what makes the most sense over the near and long term. This is the first opportunity to pass meaningful health care reform in a very long time, and we want to be sure we are consider-

ing all options and following the best course.

This year, we anticipate that there will be a number of competing health care reform bills in the 111th Congress. At this time, the LWVUS has not endorsed any specific health care legislation and we are not authorizing any state or local League to do so. The key committees in the House and Senate will be considering a number of approaches to achieve comprehensive health care reform.

We have recently received inquiries from Leagues regarding support for specific health care legislation including H.R. 676, the United States National Health Care Act. While the LWVUS did not endorse H.R. 676 in previous Congresses, individual Leagues were given the go ahead to contact their Members of Congress in support of H.R. 676 if they felt that they had member understanding and agreement. Health care reform was a priority for the LWVUS in the last Congress, but the main emphasis was on reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). H.R. 676 was one of the few bills addressing comprehensive health care reform in the 110th Congress, while it is one of many options in the 111th Congress.

We expect that there will be a lot of work to do to keep Congress focused on passing comprehensive health care reform. Please be sure to respond to LWVUS action alerts such as the current alert on the President's budget and health care funding. We look forward to working with you to achieve lasting health care reform.

In League, *Mary Wilson, President, LWVUS*

LWVSB NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE FINISHES WORK

As all of you know from reading your *Channel Voter* for the past few months and from attending units and the April forum, our Santa Barbara League has been participating in the national League's study of the National Popular Vote Compact. With your help and participation, we have completed our study and will be sending in our results to the national League after our local Board's approval on May 1.

Over 40 local League members participated in either unit meetings or the committee's own meeting to consider the consensus questions presented to us from the national League. Members came well prepared, and there was lively discussion and a real desire to grapple with the questions at every meeting.

We want to thank all of you who participated in the units, worked as part of the committee, or just attended the March forum. As soon as we know the overall national results we will let you know. This is a very important issue, and we are all interested to find out if the League is going to take a position at the national level so that we can act at the state and local level, if and when the issue again comes up in the Cali-

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ANNUAL MEETING, SATURDAY, JUNE 6 “INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES”

Please reserve Saturday, June 6, to attend our 2009 Annual Meeting to be held at the Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, in Goleta. The meeting will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 1:30 p.m.

At the business meeting we will elect our 2009-10 Board, review the budget, approve the local program, and hear year-end reports, including news from the May State League Convention in Long Beach. Information kits will be mailed in early May.

A special luncheon program on innovative communication strategies for Leagues in the 21st century will be presented by members of our ad hoc Communications Committee: LWVSB Board members Stacy Shepherd, Beth Pitton-August, and

Carmela Galvez. Education in this modern era increasingly involves on-line access and computer skills. The program will present new strategies and on-line tools that will leverage traditional communications, reach both seasoned Leaguers and potential new members, and help to bridge generational divides to promote a healthy and vibrant League here in Santa Barbara now and in the future.

We are looking forward to hearing from you at the annual meeting as we get together to plan for the coming year.

Carole Marks, Administrative Vice President

TREASURE HUNT ~ ANNUAL MEETING

Who doesn't like a treasure at a bargain price? That often happens at our annual meeting. We will have our silent auction of items donated by League members. Do you have an item from a vacation that you don't use and have put away? Maybe something that is taking room in the cupboard and seems to be mysteriously gathering dust? We are also seeking handmade articles, jewelry, food items, etc. It is fun for everyone to see the items, and, of course, it is a good fund raiser. Bring items either to the office or to Pat Shewczyk's house. Please put your name on the item, plus any other information.



Pat Shewczyk, Water Services Director

VOTERS SERVICE FOR MAY 19 ELECTION

The April 22 Election Forum explaining Propositions 1A through 1F was taped by Larry Nimmer and will be televised on Channel 21. So if you missed the forum, or want to jog your memory about it, check the Santa Barbara Channels Web site, www.sbchannels.tv, or call the League office for the schedule.

Don't forget to use the League's award-winning, nonpartisan informational Web site, www.SmartVoter.org, and tell your friends, neighbors, and colleagues about it!

Our own Web site, www.lwvsantabarbara.org, has links to all these resources.

The Easy Voter Guide is now available at the League office, in English and Spanish. You can also find it online at EasyVoter.org, in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. The state League will NOT be publishing Pros and Cons for these ballot measures, however.

And there's a NEW service this election: Videos on the Ballot Propositions! The [Easy Voter Guide Project](#) has partnered with the [Center for Governmental Studies](#) to produce *Video Voter Minutes* on each of the May 19 Statewide Special Election Ballot Propositions. All of these videos are posted to our new LWVC Education Fund YouTube channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/LWVCEF>.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

In Memoriam: Joyce Hamilton passed away in April. She was a long time Leaguer who made valuable contributions to both Voters Service and study committees during the years that she was active in the League.

Reinstated member: Rita Blau, Ph. D.

LEARNING ABOUT THE LEAGUE

At our recent League orientation of newer members one experience we did not share was that of our mentors and their new member friends. If you would like to have or be a League mentor or would like to attend a future orientation, please call Joanie Jones or Jan O'Dowd or leave a message on the office phone, 965-2422. We enjoyed the evening of March 24th with League leaders and 13 and prospective new members learning more about the League.



Bonnie Jensen and Beth Pitton-August staff the League booth at Santa Barbara's Earth Day celebration. This year our theme was the *League in Action*, and we talked to people about the state League's recommendations on the May 19 ballot measures, about the national League's materials on climate change, and the local League's support for the Citizens Height Limit Initiative on the City of Santa Barbara fall election ballots. We made many new friends, and everyone seemed to have a great time at the annual event.
Photo credit: Thomas Heck



At the April Community Forum leading school officials, Susan Salcido, John Becchio (top row), Mark Capritto and Mark Swanitz (bottom row) spoke on "Closing the Achievement Gap" in our secondary schools.
Photo credit: Thomas Heck

MEMBERSHIP FORM to join LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA

- Here's my annual membership dues of \$60*
- Second member in same household \$30
- Student \$30
- Please send me more information about League
- I can't join right now; here is my contribution of \$_____ to support the League.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Discounted dues are available for special circumstances. Contact Joanie Jones - 683-1937.*

CALENDAR – MAY 2009

Discussion Units: League Positions on Ballot Measures

- 1 Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members. NOTE CHANGE OF DATE!
- 1 Friday** **PUEBLO Immigration Forum:** “Building America from the Foundation: Immigration Reform, the Economy and Safer Communities.” 6:30- 8:00 p.m. Presidio Springs, 721 Laguna St. Info: 882-2484
- 5 Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu’s Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 6 Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 10:00-11:30 a.m. Chamomile Café, 915 Linden Ave., 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 6 Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk.
- 9 Saturday** **LWVSB Garden Party:** 2-4 p.m. Home Of Toni Schultheis.
- 13 Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.
- 14 to 17 Th-Su** **LWVC Convention**
- 19 Tuesday** **Special Election**
- 20 Wednesday** **Community Forum:** “A Critical Window of Opportunity for Health Care Reform.” 12-2 p.m. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Speakers will include: a representative from the office of Representative Lois Capps; **Peter Conn** of Health Care for All; and **Doris Nelson**, LWVUS Task Force on Health Care Reform. Brown bag lunch. Drink and cookies provided

LOOKING FORWARD TO SUMMER 2009

June 6 **Annual Meeting:** 9:30 - 1:30. Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, Goleta.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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President: Linda Phillips
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Circulation: Herb Linville,
Production: Wordesigns
314 E. Carrillo, #7
S.B., CA 93101

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization of women and men, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. If you would like to join the local League, send in the form on pg. 7 or call the League office at 965-2422.

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