



Channel **VOTER**

serving South Santa Barbara County

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

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

Vol. 70, No. 4, December 2007/January 2008



League Ph/Fax: 965-2422 • Membership Director, Joanie Jones • President, Linda Phillips

DECEMBER HOLIDAY LUNCHEON & COMMUNITY FORUM: MEET YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Wednesday, December 12, 12:15 to 2 p.m.
Louise Lowry Davis Community Center
De La Vina & Victoria Streets

Note: This month only, the date is the 2nd Wednesday!

The December Community Forum is the time to enjoy the company of our fellow League members as well as meeting some of our elected officials informally.

Food: Pat Shewczyk has again volunteered to organize the meal and is requesting 1) crackers & cheese; 2) fruits or vegetables; or 3) dessert. If you are able to contribute any of these ready-to-serve platters to the menu, please call her.

Conversation: We are inviting members of our three city councils and county supervisors for the south coast to join us. We hope they will let us know what they plan for the future, and this is your opportunity to discuss the issues with them. They will join us at our tables, where your ideas and their plans can be discussed. We will ask them to rotate to different tables so that they can talk with as many of you as possible. Bring your questions or suggestions!

DECEMBER DISCUSSION UNITS: NATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING

At the December discussion units, we will have our opportunity for input into the future program of LWVUS. In League jargon, "program" means the issues on which we will advocate; which we'll study; or what we will emphasize as community education topics.

Every two years, in early June, the national League holds its convention. In preparation, local Leagues review the current program and what action has been

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JANUARY COMMUNITY FORUM: WHY THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA NEEDS NEW HEIGHTS LIMITS

Wednesday, January 16, 12:15 to 2 p.m.
Louise Lowry Davis Community Center
De La Vina & Victoria Streets

When the League board decided, on November 9, to support a new height limit initiative for the City of Santa Barbara, it was clear that our members, and the community, would want to know why. The League has prepared some background material for you to study, which you will find on page 3.

Our January Forum will ask some of the city's most experienced planners to help us explain why the Sustainable Communities Committee and the League board think this should go to the voters in November 2008.

Our three speakers have almost 40 years of experience on the city's planning boards and commissions. Two of them have been the authors of this new initiative, and they will tell us why they have proposed it. **Bill Mahan**, who is an architect, served on the Planning Commission for 13 years. After his retirement last year he decided to try to solve a problem that he has often mentioned in recent years: the Planning Commission does not have the tools it needs to say "no" to projects that are too large for the city's historic district, El Pueblo Viejo.

(Continued on page 2)

JANUARY DISCUSSION UNITS: STATE BALLOT MEASURES

Along with the presidential primary, there are seven ballot measures on the February 8 ballot. LWV California has positions on two of them. At the January units, we will discuss these propositions. See page 3 for further details about them.

From the President's Desk...

NO REST FOR THE WEARY...

We have just finished an election in the City of Santa Barbara. LWVSB was busy with both Voters Service and advocacy. As you'll see elsewhere in this *Voter*, we conducted a candidates forum and did our *Touring with the Candidates*, which has earned rave reviews for its unique insights into the candidates. Kudos to Voters Service chair Susan Shank, Election Services vice president Janet Graham (who did double duty during much of the campaign, while Susan was out of town), Larry Nimmer, videographer extraordinaire, and Irene Stone, president of LWVSB Education Fund. Thanks also to our Ed Fund itself for sponsoring the filming of *Touring* and to Community West Bank (formerly Goleta National Bank) for its contribution.

Bev King was our ad hoc chair for advocacy supporting Measure A, to consolidate city elections with general elections. I'd like to thank Bev and her committee. Unfortunately, Measure A was defeated, so the question of how (and perhaps when) to best conduct city elections will surely need to be addressed again in the future.

We had hoped to produce our own pros & cons for Measure A as well. However, we were unable to do so in a way that would meet the League's high standards,



in the short time we had. I take responsibility for that, and apologize to you. My hat is off to the dedicated crew at LWV California who write Pros & Cons for those long ballots every state election!

SPEAKING OF STATEWIDE ELECTIONS...

On February 8, California will hold its new, early presidential primary. Because absentee ballots will begin to go out in

early January, we had planned to discuss the three ballot measures at our unit meetings in December. The state League materials will not be available till later in the month, so we will instead hold that discussion at the January units.

GET INVOLVED...

We need your help in this year with so many elections. There's something for everyone: helping with candidate forums, speakers bureaus both for Voters Service forums (pros and cons) and for advocacy (you can only choose one of these two roles), working at the polls, writing letters to the editor, answering phones in the League office before elections. Let us know how you would like to get involved.

Linda Phillips, President

JANUARY COMMUNITY FORUM

(Continued from page 1)

Architect **Donald Sharpe** has served on the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) for 13 years, followed by 8 years on the Historic Landmarks Commission. He retired from that commission, but came back in January 2007 and told the Santa Barbara City Council that he wanted to return because of his concern about the height of buildings being proposed now.

A third very experienced speaker will be announced later. We hope that you will review the arguments for this proposal on page 3 and bring your questions to this meeting. Since the League will be circulating petitions early next year to put this on next November's ballot, we hope that you will come and learn more about it.

Connie Hannah, First Vice President (Local Action)

DECEMBER DISCUSSION UNITS

(Continued from page 1)

taken on issues during the year. Then we discuss our priorities and suggestions for the coming two years. Responses from all local Leagues are used to develop a proposed program, which again is discussed, hotly debated, amended, and eventually adopted at Convention.

At the last two national conventions, delegate interest brought two issues to the foreground that are of particular concern to our local members as well. One was civil liberties; the other was global warming. Join us at the December units to help decide next year's issues!

Linda Phillips, President

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FEBRUARY BALLOT MEASURES

LWV opposes Props 91 and 92, and does not have recommendations on the other propositions.

Proposition 91 deals with whether transportation funds and gasoline taxes may be retained in the State's General Fund.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDS. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

Prohibits certain motor vehicle fuel taxes from being retained in General Fund and delays repayment of such taxes previously retained. Changes how and when General Fund borrowing of certain transportation funds is allowed. Fiscal Impact: Increases stability of state funding for highways, streets, and roads and may decrease stability of state funding for public transit. May reduce stability of certain local funds for public transit.

Proposition 92 changes the community college system in the state.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES. FUNDING. GOVERNANCE. FEES. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND STATUTE.

Establishes independent community college districts and Board of Governors. Requires minimum funding for schools and community colleges to be calculated separately. Sets fees at \$15/unit and limits future increases. Fiscal Impact: Increased state spending on K–14 education from 2007–08 through 2009–10 averaging about \$300 million annually, with unknown impacts annually thereafter. Potential loss in community college student fee revenues of about \$70 million annually.

Proposition 93 changes the term limits rules.

LIMITS ON LEGISLATORS' TERMS IN OFFICE. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

Reduces permissible state legislative service to 12 years. Allows 12 years' service in one house. Current legislators can serve 12 years in current house, regardless of prior legislative service. Fiscal Impact: No direct fiscal effect on state or local governments.

Propositions 94 to 97 (added as we go to press) are all referenda on Indian gaming compacts.



INITIATIVE TO LIMIT BUILDING HEIGHTS IN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PROPOSED FOR THE FALL 2008 BALLOT

Last month the LWVSB board voted to support a proposed Building Height Initiative. We will be presenting information on this important topic at our January Community Forum, in the hope of piquing your interest and preparing

the League to actively support this initiative.

League History on Building Heights:

Our League has a long history of being involved in the formulation and support of local ballot measures in the City of Santa Barbara. We have supported and worked on campaigns for the original city charter, the original Charter Amendment to Limit Heights, Measure A (advisory vote on living within our resources), and Measure E (limiting commercial growth).

In the case of the height charter amendment, former League President Virginia Robinson wrote in our President's Book that she had worked closely with the city attorney to develop the 60' height limit initiative; this was done hastily, she said, because a tall—6-story—project was imminent. With League's support the charter amendment passed.

Because of our history of involvement in height limitation issues, our League was the first group to be consulted about getting the current initiative on the ballot. Our League's Sustainable Communities Committee agrees that conditions have changed so much that the existing height limitation that the League supported is no longer adequate.

In May LWVSB joined other community groups in asking the city council to put this height limit measure on the ballot. They declined to do so. The city attorney explained that if the council were to put the measure on the ballot, the city would have to prepare a very complicated and expensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR). If the public puts such a measure on the ballot, however, no EIR is required. Therefore our League voted to support the proposed initiative.

Why This Initiative Is Critical Now:

The problem now is that a number of tall buildings are in the pipeline in addition to the two very large new buildings on Chapala. This is a big change from the past, when, with rare exceptions, tall buildings were public buildings like the Court House, and the County

(Continued on page 4)

INITIATIVE TO LIMIT BUILDING HEIGHTS IN SANTA BARBARA CITY *(Continued from*

Administration Building. Important historic buildings are in danger of being dwarfed by the proposed developments.

Because of this, two longtime members of the Santa Barbara City Planning Commission, one councilman, and a member of the Historic Landmarks Commission met in early 2007 to decide how to prevent our historic downtown from being drastically changed by tall buildings. They came up with the idea of a ballot measure to amend the charter to limit heights in El Pueblo Viejo (the historic district) to 40 feet. They had wanted to include a requirement for set-backs, but were advised by their attorney that by law there can be only one subject per ballot measure.

The idea to limit heights received support from other groups besides the League: Citizens Planning Association (CPA), Allied Neighborhoods Association, and the Pearl Chase Society. As they met, the suggestion was made to add a height limit of 45 feet in the other commercial areas of the city. This is consistent with the height limits in the Coastal Zone and Upper State Street.

Proposed Wording of the Initiative:

“City Charter section 1506 shall be amended to reduce the 60-foot height limit to 45 feet for all hotel, motel, office buildings, and mixed use buildings in areas zoned for industrial, manufacturing, and other commercial uses. In our historic downtown known as El Pueblo Viejo District, buildings shall be limited to 40 feet.”

Relevant Local League Positions:

Social Policy: Coordination of Social Policy and Natural Resources:

- Preservation, to the maximum possible extent, of the special character of the South Coast area and its existing quality of life...

- Staying within the South Coast’s carrying capacity based on the environmental constraints of water and air quality.

Natural Resources: Planning:

- Preservation of natural beauty as an important economic factor.

- Building height limitations for the City of Santa Barbara specified in the charter.

Arguments for the Initiative to Limit Building

Heights:

1. The proposed initiative will only affect the commercial zone, including the historic district, El Pueblo Viejo. The Upper State Street area, the Coastal Zone, and the R-3 (multi-family residential) zone already have a height limitation of 45 feet.

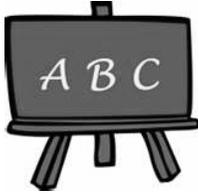
2. The League’s work on the original charter amendment (to create a building height limit of 60 feet) was developed in haste to address one project. We now see the unintended consequences of that specific limit and the need to make it more restrictive.
3. The proposed initiative will protect our important historic and cultural resources in El Pueblo Viejo (EPV) from being overshadowed and dwarfed by new development. It is only now that proposed development, e.g. next to the Arlington, threatens to do this.
4. The proposed height limits will protect public views and the small scale ambience of the city, as well as other qualities that make Santa Barbara unique and famous throughout the world.
5. The city’s design guidelines did not prevent approval of the two large projects on Chapala Street, which have drawn much criticism. The design review boards (Historic Landmarks Commission and Board of Architectural Review) and the Planning Commission need this initiative to help them regulate heights on all projects in a fair and equitable way.
6. The proposed initiative will protect solar access, which is increasingly recognized as an important factor in sustainability.
7. The existing 60-foot height limit has increased land values, making it harder to preserve or develop less tall buildings, including such community needs as affordable housing.
8. Tall buildings frequently require environmental impact reports because of their many impacts, and development and permit costs are higher.
9. Taller buildings are more expensive to build, which makes it inevitable that luxury penthouses and expensive development options win out over affordable housing. According to a spokesman for the building industry, building high with small units is the most expensive type of development.
10. Smaller building are more sustainable. They require fewer materials and less energy for heating and cooling.
11. City zoning allowing 60-foot high construction does not conform to or support the City Charter and General Plan dictates of living within our resources. If properties are built out to the allowed zoning, we will quickly surpass the 40,005 units that our existing resources and infrastructure can support. After this number is exceeded, expensive infrastructure improvements become necessary.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

EDUCATION COMMITTEE FOCUS: NARROWING THE

How can we close the gap and bring our lowest achieving students up to the new higher standards we have set for our children? Recent research suggests that we are most likely to improve learning by engaging in several important “best practices” in our schools.

They are: ongoing instructional assistance and support for teachers; ongoing monitoring of each student’s progress to identify students having difficulty and to take immediate corrective action; pre-school programs that prepare children to enter and succeed in the early grades; after-school programs that enrich, motivate and support students with extra tutoring; and strong leadership by principals to increase teacher collaboration and commitment to the state’s standards for learning.



We on the League’s Education Committee are especially concerned about the achievement gap and have been seeking out people and programs in our community that are working on these issues. We have been very impressed with the leadership and initiative we have found with the faculty at the university and the principals

of our high-need schools. Instead of being overwhelmed by the number of low achieving and mostly low income students in our high-need schools, they are attempting to find the extra resources needed to implement these “best practices” by patching together individual and foundation donations and by applying for public and private grants—an endless task, as most grants only run for one or two years. Their greatest hope is to bring together and keep operational those changes they know are essential to closing the gap. We hope to bring some of these impressive people to you in our February Forum.

We invite League members to join the education committee. There is much we need to do still, to transform our “patchwork” education system. Please contact any of our members, Marge Gordon, Ann Lorimer, Bill Marks, Jean Reiche, Dorothy Semmel and Irene Stone.

Marge Gordon, Chair, Education Committee

MEASURE D-2008

On Thursday, November 15, SBCAG met to accept the two drafts completed on Wednesday, November 7, by the Measure D Renewal Policy Development Committees of the South Coast and the North County. These two drafts will be the basis for Measure D-2008. In January 2008 there will be public polling about the draft measure. In February SBCAG will review the poll results and modify the plan if necessary. In March, endorsement by the city councils and the board of supervisors will be requested. Then if the plans are accepted, preparations will begin to seek passage in November 2008.

This measure is expected to raise \$1.05 billion through a ½ cent sales tax over a 30-year period. The separation into two plans, for each of the two county areas, takes into consideration the differences between North and South County. Since the widening of Highway 101 affects both the North and South County, \$140 million will be taken off the top and allocated for that project. The balance of the funding is divided so that each area will get an equal share of the money, to be used for their local and regional projects.

Highway 101 from Mussel Shoals in Ventura County to Casitas Pass Road in Carpinteria has received funding from State Proposition 1B, and construction will begin in 2011. Meanwhile, SBCAG is working on the widening of the section from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo, using money in the current Measure D. The remaining \$140

million dedicated to widening Highway 101 are for matching funds to complete the last eight miles.

The greater part of the North County Plan is \$341 million for local funding, to be divided among the cities. The balance of \$114 million is for various highway interchange/improvements as well as interregional transit, including \$9.5 million for alternate transportation (traffic demand reduction, bikes, safe routes to school, and specialized transit for seniors and the disabled).

In the South County, there is \$273.15 million for local funding, \$25 million for commuter/passenger rail, \$85 million for MTD, \$25.3 million for interregional transit, \$7.5million for overpass improvement in Goleta, and \$39 million for alternate transportation, as defined above.

While those in North County felt they got as much as they could for alternative transportation, those in the South felt that alternative transportation should have received a greater share of the funds. There was also great upset over the allocation for commuter rail, which many felt should have been \$40 million to get started. There may be further changes in the allocations in the future.

If you have any questions, please phone or e-mail me and I will try to answer them.

Sheila Kamhi, Transportation Consultant

GOLETA APPROVES TWO MAJOR HOUSING PROJECTS



In recent weeks the City of Goleta has given approvals to two large developments that may improve affordability on the South Coast. Michael Towbes received city council

approval to build 200 rental units at Sumida Gardens on Overpass Road, off Patterson. On November 13 the City of Goleta's Planning Commission approved Andrew Bermant's Village at Los Carneros with 275 units.

The Sumida Gardens project is important because all 200 units are committed to remaining rentals for 55 years. Thirty-four units (17%) are priced for low, very low, and moderate incomes. The city is contributing 6.8 million dollars to the project and has received a commitment that none of the units will be converted to condominiums for 55 years. The League supports this project

because of the need for rentals in our community.

The Bermant Development Company project has 69 units (25%) affordable for low incomes. Sixty-three units will be partnered with People's Self Help Housing Corporation, and they will provide housing and a children's learning center for low income families.

The 206 market rate units are not large—between 1180 and 1700 square feet—and will be work-force priced. There are 3000 jobs within a 15-minute walk, and the project includes a pedestrian and bike path to the nearby offices.

This project has been through many years of transition, having started as the Raytheon Office-Industrial plan. Former councilman Jack Hawxhurst is credited with suggesting that this would be an ideal site for work-force housing. Andrew Bermant has worked with the Rocky Mountain Institute to create a variety of condominiums and recreational opportunities on the site.

Connie Hannah, First Vice-President, Action



OFFICE HELP NEEDED FOR ELECTION SEASON

Members are needed to staff the office from 10 a.m. to 12 noon during the months of January, May, and October. This is when we are likely to get inquiries from the public about the three general elections, scheduled for February 5, June 3, and November 4, 2008.

Information will be available to help you respond to questions. If you have never staffed the office before, I will be glad to train you.

This is a short term contribution you can make to help us serve the public. Yet, you only have to fit a few hours into your busy schedules. Please phone me at 682-0757.

Sheila Kamhi, Office Manager

ELECTION REPORT

THE SANTA BARBARA CITY ELECTION on November 6 returned two of the three incumbents running—Das Williams and Helene Schneider. A newcomer, Dale Francisco, will join the council in January. Measure A, which would have moved city elections to even numbered years to coincide with federal and state elections, was defeated.

FEBRUARY 5, 2008 is the date for the California presidential primary. Seven propositions will be on the ballot. They concern transportation funding, community college funding, term limits for state legislators, and several Indian gaming compacts.

Susan Shank, Voters Service

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dorothy Boothe, who moved to Ojai last spring to live near her daughter after a stroke, enjoyed visits by friends as recently as October. On November 15, 2007 at the age of 96 Dorothy passed away with her family by her side. We send our sympathy to all her friends and family.

Please welcome our new members:

- Rita Felcher**
- Janice O. Rorick**
- Toni Stuart**

DON'T FORGET THE LEAGUE WHEN MAKING YEAR-END DONATIONS!

The Education Fund of LWVSB is our tax-deductible arm, whose goal is "to provide non-partisan information about issues and governmental processes and services to enable citizens to become active and informed voters, and to help every citizen participate in the democratic process." With three elections this year, the Ed Fund is funding many projects—such as candidates forums, "Touring with the Candidates," voter guides, the Speakers Bureau, the SmartVoter Web site, and Pros & Cons on ballot measures—to help local citizens get to know their candidates and understand the ballot measures.

You should soon receive our annual mailing requesting your support to help us carry on this important work. Checks should be made payable to "LWVSB Education Fund."

DUES RENEWAL DATE

September 1 is our official membership renewal date. If you have not paid your 2007-2008 membership yet, please do so by sending \$60 to LWVSB, ATTN: Membership, Joanie Jones, 328 E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101. You may call to check on your status. Your call will be returned. If you are a student, second in household, or on scholarship, please pay accordingly.

*Joanie Jones
Membership Development*

If you know someone who might be interested in the League, please pass along this application:

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, 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. Contract Joanie Jones - 683-1937.*

CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2007

Discussion Units: National Program Planning

- 4 Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 5 Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 5 Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m., home of Sheila Kamhi.
- 12 Wednesday** **Holiday Luncheon:** "Meet Your Elected Officials." 12:15-2 p.m. The LWVSB Board will provide lunch. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets.
- 12 Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2:30 p.m. [NB: This meeting starts ½ hour later than usual to accommodate those attending the Holiday Luncheon.] Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.
- 14 Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10:00 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.

CALENDAR - JANUARY 2008

Discussion Units: February Ballot Measures

- 2 Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 2 Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk.
- 8 Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 9 Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2:00 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.
- 11 Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10:00 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 16 Wednesday** **Community Forum:** "New City Building Height Limits." 12:15-2 p.m. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Brown bag lunch. Drinks and cookies provided.
- 21 Monday** **Channel Voter deadline for February issue.**
- 25 Friday** **South Central Coast Environmental Task Force:** 9:45 a.m., League office. Discussion of coastal issues in the tri-counties area. Guests welcome. Confirm date and time with Jean Holmes.



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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 and advocacy. If you would like to join the local League, call the League office at 965-2422.

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