



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 2008



League Phone/Fax: 965-2422

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

MAY COMMUNITY FORUM:

The High Cost of Affordable Housing

Featured Guests: Sr. Alicia Martin, Scott Smith, Craig Zimmerman, Robert Pearson

Wednesday, May 21, 12:15-2 p.m. - Louise Lowry Davis Community Center

De La Vina & Victoria Streets. Brown bag; free and open to the public

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The most intractable problem on the South Coast is our lack of affordable housing. The League and other housing activists have worked for years to try to find ways to build more affordable units. The high cost of land and building materials make it a major challenge. We have invited several local experts to come to our May Community Forum and describe how they have been able to build affordable units, and why it is so difficult. **Sister Alicia Martin**, Director of St. Vincent's large affordable housing project adjacent to Highway 154, will discuss the 10 years of extremely hard work it took them to build a project that has divisions for families, seniors, and singles.

Scott Smith, the local director of People's Self Help, will describe the smaller projects that they

have been able to develop over two counties, and how that has been accomplished. From the Towbes Group, **Craig Zimmerman** will discuss why rental housing is so hard to build, and how some projects can succeed. And the City of Santa Barbara's own **Robert Pearson**, Executive Director of Santa Barbara's Housing Authority, will describe why the city has been able to build award-winning projects, and why it will have more trouble doing so in the future.

This will be an opportunity to bring your questions about affordable housing production to the experts! We will have the usual excellent parking, and you can bring a brown bag lunch if you would like. Coffee and cookies will be provided.

Connie Hannah, First Vice President (Action)

MAY DISCUSSION UNITS: STATE PROPOSITIONS

At the May units, we will discuss the two state propositions on the June 3 ballot. These critically important measures deal with eminent domain; LWV opposes Prop. 98 and supports Prop. 99 and signed the ballot arguments. Learn about the issues, and why these two propositions are competing on the ballot.

LWV opposes PROP 98, the California Property Owners & Farmland Protection Act. This deceptive measure would abolish rent control and harm environmental protection. Californians deserve protection from eminent domain abuse, but Proposition 98 is a radical proposal that goes too far. Its extreme provisions would eliminate rent control and other renter protection laws; that is why wealthy apartment and mobile home park owners have contributed most of the money to qualify Proposition 98 for the ballot. In addition, Proposition 98 contains language that would make it difficult to protect the environment and regulate land use, growth and development. This hidden agenda would threaten water quality, hurt the environment, and thwart regulations that protect our neighborhoods.

LWV supports PROP 99, the Homeowners Protection Act. This measure is a real eminent domain reform measure that will protect homeowners, without the hidden agendas and adverse consequences of Proposition 98. Proposition 99 will prohibit the government from using eminent domain to take a home to transfer to another private party. It is supported by a broad coalition of homeowners, business, labor, cities, counties and environmentalists, including the League of Women Voters.

Linda Phillips, President

Meeting with our legislators.

One of LWV's great strengths is that we work on three levels - local, state, and national. Every year, LWV California encourages us to interview our state legislators. Leagues all over the state ask the same set of questions, based on our legislative priorities. You won't be surprised to learn that this year's questions were all about the budget crisis, in light of the state's huge deficit.



At the end of March, Marge Gordon and I, and Ann Levin from LWV Ventura County, interviewed **Pedro Nava**. Here is a summary of his responses.

Question 1 was on how to cut the budget: across the board, or by setting priorities? Nava does not support across the board cuts, and identified two of his priorities for funding: education and health care. He is particularly concerned that cuts to MediCal would begin in July, and patients will be going to county funded emergency rooms—the most expensive medical care. Costs will be shifted to the counties. The same is true for care of the mentally ill, especially the mentally ill homeless who end up in jails; this is expensive and isn't fair either to them or to the police.

Question 2 asked about revenue increases and eliminating "tax expenditures" (loopholes). Nava would support new revenues, but achieving them will be difficult. He pointed out that one structural cause of the deficit is the 2/3 vote necessary to increase taxes and pass the budget in the Legislature. Unless this is changed—which would require an initiative Constitutional Amendment—he sees no hope for increase in taxes. On the other hand, fees require only a majority vote. Fees, once authorization is passed by legislature, would be subject to local votes; this revenue goes to counties.

He would revisit all tax expenditures for usefulness and effectiveness, and mentioned several loopholes he would like to see eliminated or reviewed. He also favors better collection of in-arrears taxes and better tax enforcement, which could generate \$6 billion.

Question 2 continued with a Prop. 13 question: "It has been pointed out that commercial property is only reassessed when there is an outright sale of the property, but not when more than half of the actual ownership of that property has changed hands. Would you consider changes in the way commercial property is assessed to trigger reassessment when such changes in ownership occur?" Nava responded that commercial property should be reassessed under more

types of changes in ownership. But the current system was set up under Proposition 13, and therefore would take a citizens initiative to change.

Question 3 asked about Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed Budget Stabilization Act, which would include automatic reductions whenever the administration projects a deficit, and would give the governor added authority to enforce reductions. Nava called the act "a mistake"; the budget

must be a collaborative process between the Legislature and the governor. He especially doesn't like the ability to cut the budget in mid-year if deficits are projected, which would make school funding impossible.

Question 4 asked about state borrowing and bonds. Nava strongly prefers using bond funding only for long-term infrastructure improvements in transportation, harbors, water projects, etc. It should not be used to fill holes in the General Fund.

However, he is also concerned that the poor will suffer disproportionately from budget cuts. And with the 2/3 vote requirements, the Legislature may sometimes have to borrow.

Question 5 requested his own priorities, which are:

- 1) Education
- 2) Health care (he is a coauthor of the bill LWV supports, SB 84)
- 3) Energy. He would encourage greater conservation and less reliance on foreign oil. California must continue to lead on climate change, and develop solar and wind energy. He authored legislation to set standards for certification of Carbon Trading to assure honesty of that market, especially over-the-internet operations.

On April 20, representatives of several groups in the Health Care for All coalition met with **Congresswoman Lois Capps** to discuss healthcare reform. LWVUS has not taken stands on any healthcare bills currently in Congress, though last year we vigorously supported reauthorization of SCHIP, the State Children's Health Insurance Plan, and I thanked her for her own support for that program. I also presented Rep. Capps with LWVUS' healthcare reform position, and added that we support SB 840 at the state level, on the basis of our national position. She in turn discussed several bills in Congress, and suggested one that she thought could advance League's overall goal.

Linda Phillips, President

LWVSB IS 70 YEARS OLD!

If you have been a member of LWVSB for more than a short time, you have probably seen a faded clipping from the April 2, 1938 edition of the Santa Barbara News-Press, describing the founding of LWVSB. Under the headline "When Women Voters Were Entertained" is a photo of five women seated at a luncheon table with eight more, including "Miss Pearl Chase," standing behind them. The photo is unfortunately too dark and grainy to be reproduced effectively here, but it is included in LWVSB's 1978 *Birthday Book*, and in its 1980 *Anniversary Tribute to the League of Women Voters of the United States* for the national League's 80th birthday. The article describes how officers from the California League presented the organization to "57 interested women," who then made the unanimous decision to form the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters.

Look for more information about our founding in the months ahead. We have a lot to celebrate this coming year!

SAVE THE DATE FOR ANNUAL MEETING 2008

The Annual Meeting will be held this year on **Saturday, June 28** at the Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, in Goleta. The Annual Meeting 2008 kit will be mailed to members this month, so you will have time to read it beforehand. The meeting will start at 9:30 and end around 1:30.

At the business meeting we will elect our 2008-09 Board, review the budget, and approve the local program. We will also hear reports on State Council and National Convention.

We will have an exciting luncheon speaker (TBA). The Annual Meeting kit will give further details, including your reservation slip to send in. So plan to come! For questions and ride sharing, call Carole Marks:

ADOPT-A-POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR ELECTION ON JUNE 3.

If you can devote a very long full day (6 am to 9:30 p.m.) or a long half day (6 a.m. to 1 p.m., or 1 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.) to help staff the two precincts at Pilgrim Terrace (649 Pilgrim Terrace Drive), you will not only be serving your community but your stipend will go directly to LWVSB. Please call Jan O'Dowd to volunteer or to get more information.

VOTERS SERVICE: JUNE 3 PRIMARY

In the June 3 primary voters will select party candidates for Congress, State Senate and Assembly. There are also nonpartisan races for Superior Court Judge and Board of Supervisors in the 1st, 3rd, and 4th districts. The League and the Citizens Planning Association co-sponsored a forum for the 3rd district candidates on April 30 at the Goleta Valley Community Center.

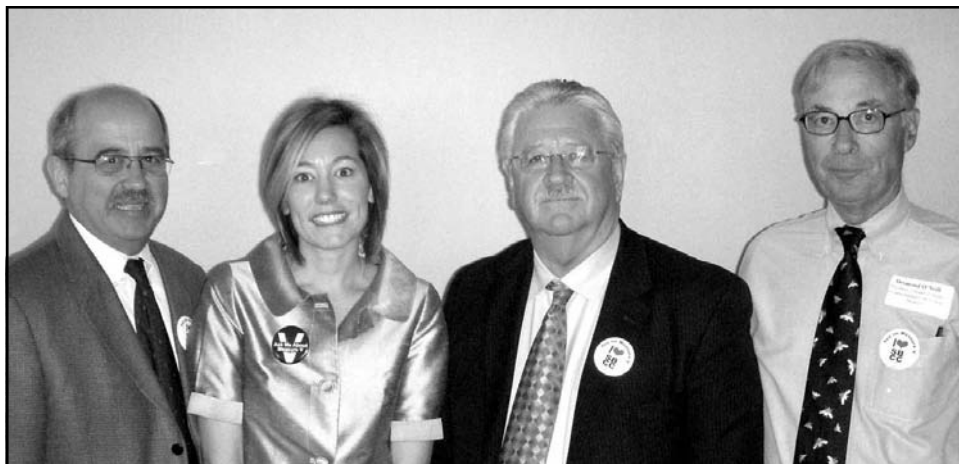
There are also two statewide propositions, 98 and 99, on the ballot. Both concern eminent domain and are explained in the enclosed Pros and Cons from LWVC.

Measure V, the Santa Barbara City College Improvement measure, is also on the June ballot. It asks voters to approve a \$77.2 million bond that will qualify the college for \$92 million in State matching funds. Most of the money would go to improvements and upgrades to campus facilities. If passed, the measure would add to property tax \$8.50 per \$100,000 of each property's assessed value (not its market value).

Many commentators are saying that this election will have a very low turnout. Let's prove them wrong. **Vote on June 3!**

Additional copies of Pros and Cons and Easy Voter are now available in the League office. Please pick some up and help me distribute them. Thanks.

Susan Shank, Voters Service



At the April Community Forum **John Romo** (left), President of SBCC, led off the presentation on Measure V, the Santa Barbara City College Improvement Measure. This measure, which LWVSB supports, will appear on the June 3 ballot. **Diane Rodriguez-Kiino**, Director, Office of Campus Diversity; **Pablo Buckelew**, Vice President, Continuing Education; and **Desmond O'Neill**, President of the Board of Trustees, contributed their perspectives to the discussion.

Photo credit: Tom Heck

NEW NATIONAL IMMIGRATION POSITION

We were pleased that the recently released (Apr 2) LWVUS IMMIGRATION POSITION agreed quite substantially with our own answers to the consensus questions from our October and November Units. After all, that is what a consensus is supposed to do. So thank you, first of all, to my wonderful Immigration Study Committee, secondly to Bev King for hosting and feeding us, and of course to all our membership for participating in this time-honored League process. I think the final position is a victory, and I hope we get to use it in the near future.

Jessica Dean, Chair, Immigration Study Committee

LWVUS Immigration Position

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

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Three presidents: Linda Phillips (LWVSB), Janis Hirohama (LWVC), Irene Stone (LWVSBF).



Special recognition to Larry Nimmer and Gary Atkins.



Some members of the current Ed Fund Board: Bill Marks, Bev King, Peg Martin, Tom Heck, Seated: Jean Holmes, Cathie McCammon, Irene Stone & Connie Hannah.

GARDEN PARTY APRIL 27, 2008

THE BUILDING HEIGHTS LIMIT INITIATIVE PETITION DRIVE SURVIVES ATTACKS

You could say this drama keeps unfolding. We are like tall trees in the midst of a hurricane. We are being bombarded by talks of compromise agreements, treaties, interim ordinances, and misleading and confusing information and editorials. But please be advised: **WE ARE CONTINUING TO GATHER SIGNATURES ON THE PETITION TO LOWER BUILDING HEIGHTS.**

The League is committed to trying to qualify the Initiative for the ballot. We believe that the people should have a right to vote on this very important issue. Signatures increased after all the publicity.

Even if we don't get enough signatures for the November 2008 ballot, we will keep going to get enough for the November 2009 ballot. We continue to need your help, and all petitions should be turned in immediately.

We would love an interim ordinance that we could live with, but unfortunately the current draft that was circulating was not it. This whole idea needs to be given much more thought. If the right ordinance came along, and if the city put its own measure on the 2009 ballot, and if it was acceptable, we might support it. But that is a whole lot of "ifs," and we believe that we have a duty to those who sign our petition to carry on and to get our measure on the ballot. We also owe a special duty to those of you contributing to our efforts, and to those of you who are working so hard gathering signatures.

Connie Hannah, First Vice President, and Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

LEAGUERS ATTEND WATERSHED PLANNING MEETING

A great delegation of LWVSB members attended the April 3rd regional workshop on State Watershed Planning held by the California Department of Conservation. Marika Davidek, Margaret Roff, Joan Kerns, Susan Shank, and Deborah Slaght were the attendees. After a presentation by John Lowrie, the program manager, a very lively question and answer session revealed problems associated with the current watershed agencies. The aim of this new program is "to advance sustainable watershed-based management of California's natural resources through community-based strategies." Further meetings will be held as the plan advances.

Joan Kerns, Co-Chair Water Committee

PLAN SANTA BARBARA DEALS WITH DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

In April, Plan SB - the city's General Plan update - was in full swing. The City of Santa Barbara released the long-awaited Development Trends Report which contains information about development trends over the past 17 years. It is clear that if Santa Barbara keeps going with the present policies, zoning, and other ordinances, the city will surpass the number of units (40,005) that the last General Plan determined to be the maximum number that could be built, while still living within the city's resources. We are presently only a few thousand units short of build-out.

But the new projection says we will see build-out of residential condominiums in mixed-use projects in commercial zones of 6000+ units. This number is extremely important, as these units in commercial zones were never anticipated, and therefore never included, in the build-out calculation of 40,005 units. Then there is the state's Regional Housing Needs Assessment, which calls for zoning that would accommodate 4000+ units. Added to all of this are projections for some modest growth in the multi-family and single-family zones.

The projections in the Development Trends Report do not present a pretty picture. Without some type of new height limits, new set-backs, and open space provisions, think of a

downtown of 60-foot buildings with no set-backs nor green space. The character of Santa Barbara and its small scale ambiance would be lost forever. Infrastructure and service costs would have to increase. For example, we would run out of water from our existing sources, and the city might have to think about bringing the desalination plant on line. This is very expensive and a high energy user. Taxes and other fees would have to increase to pay for all of these services and increased infrastructure.

The city has had two many workshops on Development Trends, and it is clear that there are different opinions on how much and where we should grow in the future. After these workshops the city will put together the issues that should be studied in the City's Environmental Impact Report. There will be more meetings and workshops devoted to Santa Barbara's future and revisions to the General Plan and Ordinances. There will be meetings and workshops in the summer. Since there will be no summer issue of the *Channel Voter*, you can call Cathie McCammon at 966-0536 or e-mail her at mccammon@cox.net for more information. You can also check the city's web page for information on future events. It has a wealth on information.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

GO SOLAR, CALIFORNIA!

In January 2007, the State of California launched the Go Solar California! campaign, an unprecedented \$3.3 billion effort that aims to install 3,000 megawatts (MW)—that's equivalent to about one and a half Diablo Canyon power plants—of new solar generation over the next decade. Recently the Public Utilities Commission issued a report on the program's progress to date. Here are some interesting excerpts from that report:

- The program has 33.4 MW of already installed projects, including 14.2 MW completed in the first quarter of 2008.
- As of March 31, 2008, the California Solar Initiative has almost 10,000 applications equaling 249.3 MW of new solar; projects have twelve months to complete installation.
- The active applications in the California Solar Initiative are worth an estimated \$649 million of solar incentive payments.

Residential applications make up 89% of all applications received. However, the total capacity of non-residential applications (207.3 MW) makes up 83% of the capacity of the applicant pool.

Jean Holmes, Energy Consultant

CARBON OFFSETS – WHAT IS YOUR FOOTPRINT?

Are you treading lightly? Or are you wearing galoshes? We all have considerable discretion in terms of the size of our environmental footprints – including the size of our personal carbon footprints. PG&E has estimated that a typical home in northern California emits 5.3 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) annually. And that's not counting the CO₂ from our personal vehicles or airplane trips.

Even before the California Air Resources Board issues its regulatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions from major point-source polluters, individuals and businesses can compensate for their routine day-by-day carbon emissions. And not just in a token way. Rather, it begins to look like a major emerging national financial market opportunity – the latest entrants into this arena include major financial and legal institutions, such as Morgan

Stanley and Beveridge and Diamond.

This new financial product is called a Carbon Offset. In California the agency charged with validating a registered offset is the California Carbon Action Registry (CCAR). This non-profit, public-private partnership has been verifying and registering carbon mitigation activities for the past seven years. Nationally, a new entity is becoming active, the Chicago Carbon Exchange (CCX), which will function as a carbon commodities market. It will bring buyers and sellers together to define the prices and conditions for acceptable contracts. The current CCX price for offsetting a ton of CO₂ is \$1.80.

Just what is the nature of a carbon offset project? It can be any activity that leads to a reduction in CO₂ or methane emissions. (Other greenhouse gases are not presently

(Continued on page 7)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please welcome new members:

Ann G. Baird,

Helen Gordon,

Stella Larson,

Kathryn S. Snow,

Change of phone number: Dorie Bulloff Kirtman -

Joanie Jones, Membership Development

CARBON OFFSETS *(Continued from page 6)*

included as offset commodities.) The buyers and sellers negotiate the conditions for each contract, and these conditions must be such that emissions reductions are real, verifiable, measurable, additional, and permanent. For there to be a market, the reductions (or credits) must also be monetized.

In California, there are only three types of carbon early action projects for which performance standards have been defined by the Air Resources Board. These include forestry "best practices" and improvements in how forest lands are managed, and methane reductions at dairies and at landfills. Such projects are assessed by CCAR to attribute Carbon Reduction Credits (CRCs) to each specific project. It is possible that these credits may be accrued to be used in future cap and trade transactions, if the state institutes such a program. Many carbon reduction projects also have co-benefits, and the sponsors of those projects are then in a position to advertise these associated good deeds. Outside of CCAR, other types of projects are acceptable, but each must be validated by an accredited verification specialist.

Since carbon offsets are presently entirely voluntary, who are the purchasers? While I certainly don't have a complete list of them, in California they include: the governor's office, Yahoo, Google, Whole Foods, Safeway, and PG&E. The rationale being given by these entities is that they have

an ethical responsibility for addressing their contributions to climate change. PG&E has also set up a Climate Smart program to encourage its customers to purchase offsets of the carbon emissions associated with their own electric and natural gas use. The customer funds are invested directly into either methane capture at dairies or native forest restoration.

Just what are the anticipated merits of this whole endeavor? Quite simply, as Karen Douglas of the Environmental Defense Fund puts it, carbon offsets may hold "transformative power" by getting the unregulated sectors of our society to acknowledge their roles and responsibilities in addressing climate change. Furthermore, investments in offsets will provide a funding stream to foster incremental, and hopefully innovative, approaches to reducing carbon emissions.

Carbon offsets are expected to remain a voluntary means for encouraging the nonregulated parts of our society to address greenhouse gas emissions. They certainly are attractive in many ways. However, Chris Page, Yahoo's "Climate Smart" person, recently posed an important question deserving of near-term attention: "Just where does energy efficiency fit into the Carbon Offsets equation?" The LWVC's Energy Committee is waiting for an answer to her question.

Jane Turnbull, LWVC Energy Program Director
jturnbu@ix.netcom.com

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 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 2008

Discussion Units: June Ballot Measures (Props. 98 & 99)

- 6 Tuesday **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush,
- 7 Wednesday **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley,
- 7 Wednesday **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk,
- 9 Friday **Board Meeting:** 10:00 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 14 Wednesday **Afternoon Unit:** 2:00 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead,
- 17-18 Sat. - Sun. **LWVC Leadership Council:** Our Bridge to the Future: Sacramento.
- 21 Wednesday **Community Forum:** "The High Cost of Affordable Housing." 12:15-2 p.m. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Brown bag lunch. Drinks and cookies provided. Speakers will be **Sr. Alicia Martin**, St. Vincents projects, **Scott Smith**, People's Self Help, **Craig Zimmerman**, Towbes Group, and **Robert Pearson**, S.B. Housing Authority.

LOOKING AHEAD

JUNE

- 3 Tuesday **Election Day**
- 13-18 Fri-Wed **LWVUS Convention in Portland**
- 28 Saturday **LWVSB Annual Meeting:** 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, Goleta.

JULY

- 18 Friday **South Central Coast Environmental Task Force:** 9:45 a.m. Regional Leagues meet at the LWVSB office to discuss coastal environmental issues. Call Jean Holmes, to verify time and date.

AUGUST

- 23 Saturday **Santa Barbara Pro-Choice Coalition's Great American Write-In,** 1-3 p.m., Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara Main Library.



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Santa Barbara, California 93101

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President: Linda Phillips,
Voter Editor: Anne Heck,
Circulation: Herb Linville,
Production: Wordesigns, 963-4883
314 E. Carrillo, #7
S.B., CA 93101

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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