

CALIFORNIA VOTER

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

Convention News from LWVLA

New Voices, New Challenges!

LWV Los Angeles--along with sister Leagues throughout Los Angeles County--looks forward to welcoming you to the 59th Convention of the League of Women Voters of California.

Los Angeles may be a hard city to understand on short acquaintance, but for those who live here it is one of the most exciting cities in the world: it's a place of extraordinary diversity that is ever-changing. Conventions tend to eat up every minute in plans and strategies, so we have planned excursions to give you a taste if you come early or stay afterwards.

You'll meet a lot of volunteers from all over the county and certainly delegates from all over the state. It goes without saying that you will work hard. But we hope you'll have a good time, too!

Xandra Kayden, President, LWVLA

Come early

Welcome to everyone planning to come to convention! We are pulling out all the stops to make Los Angeles an enjoyable experience for delegates. There will be great tours the day before convention--Hollywood, a walking tour of downtown, an evening at the Getty Museum -- and performances at the LA Philharmonic Thursday night. *So come early!*

Susan F. Rice, Convention Chair

Our local involvement (and yours)

The first thing Xandra Kayden did when she got home from LWVC Convention 1999 was to call Susan Rice and ask her to chair the Steering Committee for Convention 2001. She breathed a great sigh of relief when Susan agreed to take on this monumental task. Susan, a professional fund-raiser and former LWVC President, hit the ground running and has never stopped.

Susan's committee numbers about 25 dedicated members. You'll meet them at convention, but we'd like to introduce two in advance. Yvonne Regan of LWV Los Angeles and Sandy Thorn of LWV Downey Area are cochairs in charge of volunteers. They have recruited an impressive total of about 130 volunteers from all over the county and are working on a training manual to keep last-minute confusion to a minimum. Yvonne (310-454-2757) or Sandy (jserrano@juno.com) would love to hear from *you* if you're interested in volunteering at Convention 2001.

Because inquiring minds want to know

We've set up an e-mail discussion list so League members can share information about convention. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to: LWVCConvention-subscribe@yahoo.com

As a *discussion list*, it reflects the interests and needs of subscribers. It'll be a good place to drum up support for your caucus or for the motion you plan to bring to the floor. It will also be a source of last-minute schedule changes, travel/entertainment advice, and the always-useful search for roommates.

An unofficial online newsletter at LWVCConvention@yahoo.com, will contain subscribers' first-hand impressions of convention activities. It will also be helpful to Leaguers who can't attend and a valuable resource for delegates to compile board reports or *VOTER* articles once back home from convention.

Perhaps the main benefit of an e-mail discussion list is the head start it gives delegates on meeting each other—it's always a thrill to read the nametag on someone we've never seen before and to have that sudden realization that this is an old friend from Cyberspace.

There are banquet speakers . . . and then there's Sheila Kuehl

We've all heard "inspirational" or "entertaining" banquet speakers short on intellectual content, or politicians or academics who pack in facts but put us to sleep. State Senator Sheila Kuehl is inspirational, entertaining and informative all at the same time; we're delighted she will keynote the Saturday banquet.

Visit www.vote-smart.org to see how Kuehl filled out the National Political Awareness Test. You may think you're reading a list of League positions! There will be nothing predictable about the content, approach and delivery this experienced speaker always tailors to the occasion and the crowd.

Don't plan to write notes for a caucus or workshop while listening to Sheila Kuehl with one ear. The Senator will win your full attention, and you'll find yourself quoting her for weeks afterward.

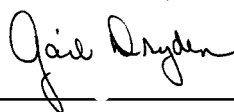
See you in L.A. in May!

From the President

I am so looking forward to meeting with League delegates at convention. *New Voices, New Challenges* is such an appropriate theme for our time together. And, there will be some energizing new "voices" at the first plenary session-- so be sure to arrive on time!

Thanks to all local Leagues for helping the LWVC be prudent with our scarce resources by including this convention preview in your local *VOTER*. The LWVC Board greatly appreciates your help.

At this convention-- the culmination of my term as your president-- I look forward to celebrating accomplishments and looking ahead to a restructured, vital League. My sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve you.



Convention 2001 Workshops

Training, Information, Exchange, Networking

A highlight of Convention 2001 is the number and variety of workshops being offered. Rather than the traditional 10, there will be 15 workshops this year. Delegates and visitors may attend three each. In response to requests from local Leagues throughout the state, there will be a mix of training sessions, panel discussions, and presentations for both newer members and not so new members.

Presidents

There will be a two-hour New Presidents workshop on Friday afternoon designed just for you. We have also scheduled a special Presidents Breakfast Sunday morning which includes a presentation by Susan Rice and Carol Abrams (LWVLA). They will bring their professional expertise and extensive League background to bear on questions swirling around that oft heard phrase: I'm a president, not the development director (fund-raiser, etc.).

Don't miss this opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills to make your presidency more manageable and bring in new revenues at the same time.

Training/Networking

Other workshops provide the training you have been seeking. Public speaking with no fear, fundraising strategies, how to organize a local study (and why), building a website for your League, and attracting diverse populations to your programs will be the theme of various sessions.

And, at League events there is always the chance to share your knowledge and learn from others. Successes will be featured. There will be panel presentations on how some local Leagues have influenced their local governments, how to engage youth in voter activities, and more.

Choosing three workshops to attend may be your hardest decision, for the content is rich. Come ready to learn a lot, gain new ideas, and attain practical skills.

Restructuring the LWVC Board

Few women today can volunteer the 40-60 hours a week required of the LWVC president, nor can many afford the time commitment to serve on the board.

Recognizing this, a LWVC board-appointed committee has examined other ways for the board to function. We have been aided by members of the Stanford Alumni Consulting Team (ACT), a volunteer project of Stanford School of Business graduates.

An e-mail survey of local League presidents, interviews with LWVC board members and online discussion led to a long list of findings and recommendations. Findings reaffirm what active members know: we value both the League's education and advocacy roles, and local Leagues are the major strength of LWVC. Briefly summarized, the recommendations are:

- Clarify differences between education and advocacy; clearly assign portfolios; elect a separate chair with specific responsibility for the LWVCEF by July 1, 2001
- Align priorities with resources; review financial management practices of the LWVC/EF by July 1, 2001
- Develop comprehensive plans to increase membership and provide training of local League boards by September 1, 2001
- Plan to fund and hire an executive director (ED) not funded by increased

per member payments, whose focus is to provide services to local Leagues; adopt a development plan by July 1, 2001 with hiring of ED by Convention 2003

- Obtain local League support for the plan; give opportunity for local input, including at Convention 2001 and Presidents Council 2002.

With these goals and timelines, it will be important for Leagues to further share interests, concerns and ideas. An updated report will be given at convention. Time to discuss it will be provided. Come to convention with the thoughts and ideas of your League members regarding these restructuring recommendations.

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President Gail Dryden

Choices for a Vital Community

Get your community talking about how to improve quality of life!

Would you like for people to find common ground to improve quality of life in your community? Do you wonder how to get people with disparate points of view to begin talking with each other?

LWVC has a tool to help you initiate that kind of engagement in a comfortable setting where people share values and perspectives on issues they care about. The forums are useful for League work as well as with other community groups.

Find out more at www.ca.lwv.org. Under *League Services*, click on the link to *Choices for a Vital Community: Which Way do We Go?* Also, look for Linda Phillips at convention and talk with her about holding a forum in your town.