



Escondido Area VOTER

SAN DIEGO NORTH COUNTY, CENTRAL

February, 2007

LWV of Escondido Area

Serving the communities of Escondido, Fallbrook, Pala, Pauma Valley, Rainbow, Ramona, San Marcos and Valley Center

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Meetings are generally held on the second Saturday of every month. All members welcome.

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Voter Editor:
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Directors Emeritus in Perpetuity:

ELIZABETH KORNHAUSER
1908-1998

MARGE WEST
1928-2006

League voicemail:
760 599-3211



GENERAL MEETING

POPULATION IMPACT: SHOULD WE BE ALARMED?

**The human population grows by over 200,000 every day.
Is this an urgent crisis?**

Yes it is, according to our first **speaker, Dr. Milton Saier**, UCSD Professor, president of the San Diego Chapter of Population Connection. Dr. Saier received his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, and was a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins University. He has published extensively--papers and texts.

No it's not, according to our second **speaker, Raul Lopez Palm**. Mr. Palm grew up in Mexicali, and completed his undergraduate engineering degree at age 19 and a Masters degree in Science Operation and Statistics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Mr. Palm has been the owner of a successful business in Escondido for 23 years.

**There will be a question and answer period after the meeting.
Questions from the audience will be welcomed.**

MARCH 10, 2007

10:00 AM to Noon

**JOSLYN SENIOR CENTER, ROOM 4
210 E PARK AVE., ESCONDIDO**

For more information call Margaret Liles 760 749-9513, mmlliles@aol.com

April 14, 2007: Board Meeting:

Escondido Public Library, .248 S.Kalmia
10:15 AM to 12:30 PM.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<http://escondido.ca.lwvnet.org>

The Board decided at it's January meeting to develop the local web site as a vehicle for providing voters with issue-oriented information pertaining to important local matters.

ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING

At our annual planning meeting, members agreed to emphasize voter education. We will be presenting at least four forums, beginning with our March 10 meeting concerning human population (a global issue.)

During 2007, we will hold at least three additional forums. Healthcare, immigration, and local land use planning will be the focuses of the three other forums.

STATE ANALYST RAISES WARNING FLAGS ABOUT BUDGET

As the new state legislative session gets under way, the Governor's vision continues to be that of California moving forward to a bright future with no new taxes. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) fiscal outlook for next year, however, takes a more sober view marked with a number of warning flags.

The LAO says that while this year's budget is expected to end with a reserve of about \$3.1 billion, projected expenditures will exceed revenues by about \$5 billion in each of the next two budget years. The reserve could help to balance next year's (2007-2008) budget, leaving a \$2.4 billion deficit to be dealt with, but this does not solve the ongoing structural deficit. [*The "structural deficit" refers to the situation in California that under present laws the state's yearly liabilities exceed the state's income. Ed.*]

In the last couple of years the reserve was generated by a healthy economy that produced higher than expected revenues. The Governor and Legislature used that windfall to increase spending in many program areas. Now the question is whether they can maintain that spending and deal with the ongoing deficit if, as the LAO expects, the economy is more "subdued" in 2007. The LAO's estimates do not include the Governor's "compact" with higher education, which promised increased future funding.

The LAO does include a transfer of funds to the Budget Stabilization Account required under Proposition 58, half of which is supposed to go to accelerated repayment of the deficit financing bonds. These repayments, as well as borrowing from other special funds, local governments and schools, represent the major share of the deficit and average about \$3 billion a year for the next few years.

These obligations, added to the debt incurred with the passage of new infrastructure bonds approved by the voters in November, would push the debt service ratio, which is the percentage of the General Fund (GF) needed to repay debts, up sharply over the next few years to a peak of 8.1 percent in 2009-2010 before

dropping back to a more normal 6 percent. The Governor and Legislature can stretch out the repayment of the deficit bonds, and may be likely to do so, given the consequences to a number of program areas that would suffer in such a budget squeeze.

The LAO notes several areas of increased costs that will squeeze the budget. One is the rising costs of pension and health benefits for retired state employees. These are now paid out of the annual GF. The administration has proposed to fund part of this liability through a pension obligation bond, but has so far been stymied by adverse court rulings. In the meantime, the LAO says the unfunded future liability is approaching \$100 billion.

Another problem is the cost of improvements to the prison health care system which is now being forced by the courts, to say nothing of the fact that the courts are also pressing for improvements to the prison system in general. Other state health program costs are also rising sharply, due to increasing caseloads and other factors.

Schools, on the other hand, will benefit substantially from the operation of Proposition 98 on the overall general fund and increases in the local property tax contribution. The LAO estimates K-14 funding will be 4.3 percent higher than this year.

The LAO says that in a good economy the state should be generating surpluses rather than deficits and that a continuing failure to "address the long-term fiscal imbalance would leave the state in a precarious position."

(This article was sent by the LWV of California for Voter publication.)

LWV CELEBRATES 87 YEARS OF PROMOTING DEMOCRACY:

February 14, 2007 is the League of Women Voters 87th birthday. As the League honors the years of work its members accomplished, it is also looking to the future.

"As we celebrate the difference we have made over the years, we remain focused on the future, working to keep the Escondido Area strong, healthy and vibrant," said June Rady, president of the LWV of Escondido Area.

"This year, the League remains committed to our mission to educate and engage members of the community in their government. The League of Women Voters is *the* organization where hands-on work leads to civic improvement," said President June Rady.

For 87 years, League members have strived to make democracy work for its citizens. Our members work toward that goal every day by reaching out to new citizens and first-time voters, protecting our natural resources, improving our election systems and holding public forums on government transparency and other important issues.

Prior to the Nov. 7, 2006 election, the LWV of Escondido Area sponsored or moderated ten candidate and ballot measure forums.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

At the January 13 Board Meeting, the Board approved **Allen Lenefsky** a member of the board to work with Pat Coony on **Voter Services**. Allen has been an Administrative Law Judge in the County for the last eight years. He was Deputy County Counsel in Imperial County for eight years. He is originally from Colorado and now lives in Vista.

Long time Board Member **Kathleen Cloonan** (formerly Asst. Director of Natural Resources) has graciously agreed to serve as our **Director of Membership**, and was voted into that position at the February 10 Board Meeting. Kathleen is a retired teacher/nurse and lives in Escondido.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

During the last year, our League has gained six new members:

G. Daniel Brewer, San Marcos,
Dorothy Gluck, Escondido,
Pamela Hammond, Escondido,
Patricia Meyer, Vista, and
Jack Paxton, San Marcos.

Welcome to our League!

OVERSIGHT, IT'S IMPORTANT

You could be a part of keeping public officials on their toes.

You could become an observer for the League. It's easy, interesting, and often very entertaining.

If you are interested in becoming an observer, please call Margaret Liles at 760 749-9513, or e-mail her at mmliles@aol.com.

SCHLORSHIP INCREASED:

At the February 7, 2007, Board Meeting, the Board unanimously agreed that our League will be offering a \$1,000 scholarship to an Inland North County high school senior who submits the winning essay of no more than 500 words. The topic will be "Why Should You Vote?" Deadline for applying is April 20, 2007 and the scholarship will be presented at the league's **annual meeting tentatively** scheduled for **Saturday, May 5, 2007, 10:00 am to noon**, at the Lake San Marcos Country Club. Vivian Doering will be in charge of the contest.

This increase in the scholarship amount will pretty much deplete our scholarship fund. So, we hope that our members will replenish it with their **tax-deductible** contributions. Contributions should be made out to the **League of Women Voters Education Fund** and sent to **League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 921, Escondido, CA 92033**.

IMMIGRATION STUDY

One of our League's forums this year will address the immigration issue. The LWVUS Immigration Study Committee continues its work. Several of the background papers are now posted on the LWVUS Web site; www.lwv.org, including "Immigration and the Economy," "Economic Aspects of Authorized and Unauthorized Immigration," and "Federal Immigration Policy and Proposed Reforms." More will be posted shortly. The LWV Immigration listserv is now up and running as well. Check the "For Members" section of the LWVUS Web site to sign up.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE TO DEBATE HEALTH CARE REFORM:

Health care is at the forefront of issues before the legislature this year. To date, more than 15 health care coverage bills have been introduced. The chief new contenders are bills introduced by Senate President pro Tem Don Perata and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's plan. The Governor is currently seeking a legislator to author his plan. **Our League will hold a forum on health care issues this fall.**



ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Please renew your dues on time. Sending out second notices takes a significant bite out of our Local League's funds. Thank You!