



League of Women Voters of Palos Verdes Peninsula

Voter

lwvpalosverdes.org

(310) 784-7787

August/September 2018

CALENDAR 2018

No County Board meeting in August

No PVP Board meeting in August

Wednesday	Sept 5	County Board Meeting	9:30am	TBD
Saturday	Sept 8	Tri-League Meeting	9:30-2:00	The Depot Restaurant 1250 Cabrillo Ave Torrance, CA 90501
Wednesday	Sept 12	PVP Board Meeting	Noon	Nell Mirel's House
Saturday	Sept 29	Pros and Cons Meeting	9:30-1:00	Hollinbeck Palms 573 S Boyle Street Los Angeles, CA 90033

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday	Oct 13	Candidate Forum (State Assembly, State Senate, Congressional)	10-12 noon	Hesse Park
Monday	Oct 15	Ballot Issues	6-9 pm	Main Library
Friday	Nov 9	Elected Official's Reception	5:30-8:00	Interpretive Center

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Presidents' Message

We hope you are all continuing to enjoy your summer activities. Popovers was a successful event with a new format which let us hear all the speakers instead of choosing a workshop. And, of course, the lunch was excellent.

We are now starting to get ready for the fall elections season. We welcome anyone who would like to participate with our speaker's bureau to contact Nancy Mahr. If you wish to speak, please attend the training in September. This is where you get all the information about the current crop of initiatives that will be on the ballot. It is interesting and informative. If you are not interested in being a speaker, you can still help us by assisting. We also remind you to refer your family and friends to our [Voter's Edge](#) site where information on the candidates can be found.

We are also in the planning stages for our Fall Tri-League meeting on Saturday, September 8th. We will be joined by Helen Hutchison, the California State League President. She will speak about many League issues, including the new National League "roadmap". This was a major point of discussion at the LWVUS Convention in June. We have all been aware that times are changing and the League has not necessarily kept up with all the changes. Young women are now super busy with work and families and how they access news and events means that we have to find them where they are. This means social media and new ways of reaching out. To keep The League relevant we have to attract new members and address their concerns and interests. National has been working on this project for over 2 years, and while we have some questions, we applaud this reformulation of The League. We do not expect our basic values to be changed but hope to reach a larger segment of the population to join us. The meeting will be held at The Depot Restaurant in Torrance beginning at 9:30 am. Brunch will be served. We hope all of you will join us and provide your thoughts on The League as it moves into its second century.

We would also like to remind you all that the county is putting together committees on various issues that are of current interest. If you have an interest in any of these areas, you can join the committee and get the latest news. Most interactions will be by emails. There are groups for the homeless housing issue, another for guns, and yet another for education. In addition there is a Tri-League group that is active with mental health issues. You can email Viola or Karen about any subject you feel should be a center of interest.

We also remind you that advocacy is a core activity for The League. We only lobby on issues we have studied and for which we have a position. Both National and State have made advocacy easy for us—we have only to click on a message to send it. Watch your emails for these opportunities.

Don't forget - it is time to renew your membership! Information on how to renew is below. We thank you for your membership and your support.

We hope to see all of you at Tri-League or a forum soon.

Karen Buresh and Vi Jungerich,

Co-Presidents

League of Women Voters of the United States 53rd National Convention: *Creating A More Perfect Democracy*

by Karen Buresh



More than 1000 League representatives from across the United States gathered together in Chicago, Illinois June 28th to July 1st for the League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS) 53rd Convention. This National Convention, held in even years, is an opportunity to meet League leaders from across the country and learn more about the work of The League nationally and at the state and local levels. This year, a total of 762 Leagues were represented with 867 voting delegates from 49 states and the District of Columbia, one of the largest Convention contingents in many years.

League leaders from 49 states and the District of Columbia attended leadership workshops and heard from guest speakers about League priorities. Over the course of the 3 days, representatives attended plenary sessions on official League business such as budget, program and the election of officers for 2018-2020. In addition, League representatives participated in education and advocacy workshops, attended a wide variety of caucuses, workshops and information sessions on subjects such as immigration, open primaries, elections and gerrymandering, and shared ideas, lessons and practices with other League members across the country.

The 53rd National Convention was opened by LWVUS president, Chris Carson, who spoke about the need for The League to adapt to the needs of the 21st Century. A cornerstone of the Convention was the "Transformation Roadmap", a developing plan to ensure that The League enters its second century. The elements in the Roadmap include (1) advancing a clear strategic focus; (2) building a more inclusive culture, a move away from continuing "The League Way"; (3) building a healthier League network, including the development and implementation of a "Join at All Levels" membership platform; and (4) increasing capacity at all levels, to lessen the administrative demands that take away from the core mission of The League. National has partnered with Wellstone Action for training on developing and mobilizing skills to increase The League's impact across the country. Every Convention attendee participated in a mobilization training session and then broke into groups to discuss how to engage new volunteers and build upon existing volunteer networks.

Over the four-day Convention, delegates voted on the priorities that the national organization should focus on for the next biennium. The *Campaign for Making Democracy Work*, a continuing priority for The League, includes ensuring a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Rights, Improving Elections, and advocacy for the National Popular Vote Compact, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting. League delegates affirmed the Campaign as the League's focus, and included issues such as abolition of the Electoral College and

advocating a national popular vote. The delegates also affirmed The League's support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by adopting a motion from the floor that League take appropriate steps to defend the ERA, once it is adopted by ratification of it by the final 38th state to make it law.

On behalf of the League of Palos Verdes Peninsula, I made a motion for consideration of a study on issues relating to Artificial Intelligence (AI). I raised this as a non-recommended item. Based upon the work and research done by our League and its AI Committee, I asked for a National study on Artificial Intelligence (AI), including (1) the economic impacts of AI; (2) the loss of tax base resulting from the increased use of AI; (3) ethical parameters in the development and use of AI; and (4) transparency in the legislative and regulatory process for AI. While the motion was not successful, and no non-recommended studies were approved, I received a great deal of support and encouragement from League representatives from both within the State of California and throughout the country. Many League leaders recognize this is an important emerging topic that must be addressed and believe that the League should in the forefront of addressing the many issues created by the increased use of AI in our society.

The LWVUS National Convention is an excellent way for all members – both experienced and those new to The League – to learn about the many issues addressed by The League and to meet other League members from throughout the United States. Mark your calendar – Convention 2020 will be held on June 25-28, 2020 in Washington DC.



Social Policy Snapshots

By Vi Iungerich

These are some recent articles about a variety of interlocking issues which are changing our democracy. How we define and see different parts of our population determines where and how we live as citizens. Policies that govern need to start with clear insight into what the problems are, but lately, it has become increasingly difficult to formulate positions, since perceptions of our society are impacted by different versions of what is true. We no longer have a national vision of who we are or how we function best. The news media has given way to strident positions that are not fully debated. Newspapers and news magazines are replaced by social media and TV hype that skip critical information.

These articles will start with how we stratify society and the importance of inequality. We use homelessness as an example of how we perceive and address one problem, and lastly, look at ways to determine truth and facts.

Social Stratification

It is useful to go back to some basic definition of social stratification to discuss our present understanding of society. Social Stratification can be referred to as a division of society into strata or layers that are superimposed one above another. This arrangement can be viewed in several ways based on factors like class, ethnicity, wealth, status, gender, power or other categories. There is usually an unequal distribution of rights and privileges through social strata.

There are 4 basic forms of social strata. These are slavery, estate, caste and class. Although we like to think slavery is not part of modern society—there is still a form of this with some criminal activities. Estate stratification is another term for Feudal systems-- where land owners had rights and duties and serfs or peasants composed the lowest strata. The Caste system is still part of India, although this country has been trying to dissolve this system. The most common division across the world, however, is the class system.

Marx divided society into 2 classes: the Capitalist and the Workers (or labor) class. But most societies define class based on ownership of crucial resources (economic or political). The most common class system is the 3 class system: the upper class or those that are wealthy, the middle class, and the lower or “working” class. These classifications also help to decide the status of an individual.

Within classes social stratification can be characterized in several different ways. Universally societies make hierarchies. Gender is a common division and is intrinsic in many societies. There may be different norms in a patriarchal society for men and women, and they may follow different norms even within the same society, depending on the strata they are in. For example, wealthy women may have different norms than poor women. In the US inequality is often present even if everyone is assumed to be equal. Benefits, opportunities, talent, status and prestige are all traits that

can be inherited or earned and they often play a role in placing us in a stratum. Our nation, as well, is often placed nationally in the world by statistical data using wealth, education or health, to name just a few categories.

The serious role of strata often hides difficulties with strata mobility. It is not easy for someone who is poor to rise into the wealthy class, and our misunderstanding of causes of social stratification allows us to carry beliefs about society based on myths and outdated data. One popular theory that contributes to misunderstanding is the Functionalist View. This view believes that social stratification is necessary for a functioning and stable society. Functionalists believe inequality is beneficial—that it provides a motivating factor to do difficult jobs which can be rewarded by higher pay and greater status. But the bias of placing someone in a particular strata or class is not currently acknowledged by the general population. Studies show that inequality does not produce a better society. Despite the popular beliefs of a large segment of us, poor people are not always lazy and undeserving but often struggle due to outside factors, such as poor education or minority ethnicity that is not acknowledged.

Inequality (Report based on UN special rapporteur Philip Alston, June 28)

The UN recently released a report which finds that current US policies reward the wealthy and punish the poor. This report, which was strongly condemned by the current administration, found that the US is currently exacerbating inequality by giving the rich high tax breaks, while at the same time it is slashing benefits for the poor. These findings are a stunning example of the Functionalist View which has led to the US approaching 3rd World-type statistics. While the US population still believes that the country provides equality of opportunity for all to succeed -- in reality, equal opportunity is more of a myth, especially for minorities and women. How we view our homeless population is just one example.

Three Common Myths about Homelessness (Based on an article by Paul Toro July 2018)

Myth 1: The homeless and poor will always be with us.

This belief seems to be based on a misinterpretation of Jesus in Mathew 26:11 that people need not be concerned with caring for the homeless. The US has one of the highest homeless rates among developed nations at 6.1%. In a telephone survey, it was found a person has a chance of experiencing homelessness at some point in their life of between 2.2-8.6%. Providing supportive services has shown the ability to decrease the homeless population.

Myth 2: Homelessness affects only a very limited segment of American Society.

Homelessness touches the lives of a wide range of Americans. Many people believe that most of the homeless are mentally ill, however, studies show only one quarter to one third have a serious mental illness. Far more common (60-75%) is substance use disorder. Yet, in the homeless population, both of these disorders are uncommon for two growing groups: mothers with children and homeless youth. The population of homeless college students is increasing. In addition, they commonly suffer from food insecurity. In a recent survey of 40,000 students across the US, 9% of university students

and 12% of community college students had been homeless in the past year.

Myth 3: The public has developed “compassion fatigue” when it comes to homelessness.

There is no evidence to support this myth, while there is evidence of media fatigue. Surveys show that a majority of the public would pay more taxes to help the homeless. Before 1980 when Reagan took office, there was no media interest in the subject. Interest in this population then took off and peaked in 1987 with over 800 articles a year, the same year that major federal funding was passed. After that, media interest declined until 1995. Media interest has now been steady at a relatively low level with news articles in major newspapers at around 200 plus a year.

Facts and Truth (Biased Beliefs)

With the loss of newspapers and nationally balanced and accepted TV news, social media and opinions have replaced dry facts. This transformation has been devastating for our democracy, as now we have few common beliefs about what is “true”. Last year Scientific American (June 2017) published an article showing that the US is at a low point for truth in politics. In 2016 Oxford Dictionaries chose “post-truth” as its new word for the year. Trust in the mainstream media at that time had dropped from around 50% to 32%. Only 29% had any trust in fact-checking. People (62%) were using social media for news, even though a Stanford study showed most consumers could not tell real from fake news. As predicted, this development has led to high political polarization.

To counter this problem in 2015 a group of behavioral scientists, along with many concerned citizens, launched the Pro-Truth Pledge, asking all political signees to commit to a set of truth-oriented behaviors. Whenever they share a news article, signees are encouraged to add a sentence stating they took the pledge and fact-checked the article, which serves to remind people of their ethical commitment. Furthermore, they are encouraged to share publically that they took the pledge and to ask others to hold them accountable. This approach deliberately increases the risk of negative consequences, if they share fake news. The Pledge also asks signers to hold others accountable and requests those that share fake news to retract it. Pledge takers get truth-oriented resources and can band together with others who have taken the pledge. There are volunteers who are trained and vetted to mediated disagreements about questionable statements.

We, of the electorate, can help with this problem by asking our candidates if they have taken the “pledge” and if not – why not. We can also seek out those sources that we know try to present a full and accurate picture of an issue. Award-winning mainstream newspapers such as The Washington Post, the LA Times or The Wall Street Journal and those media that try to find and present full stories are still there. Most of us know how to find them, but in the heat of the noise, we might not keep a balanced perspective or turn to them. Remember to check more than one reliable source and cross-check them.



AI Update

By Vi Iungerich

We took our proposal of an AI study to the LWVUS National Convention. Karen Buresh, co-president of the PVP League, represented us. Although the convention did not support any new national study, Karen received a good deal of enthusiasm from many attending members. We continue to see this issue as one of great economic importance and will continue to follow developments in the field.

The Future of Pharmaceutical R&D is Now Pioneering Quantum Computing

(Accenture 7/2018)

Recently three tech companies: Biogen, Accenture and 1Qbit have combined forces to develop a method to analyze large scale molecules. Since many biologically active molecules are large, a pharmaceutical firm can now compare and locate similarities using a quantum-enabled method.

This method has broken new ground in several areas. When comparing molecules it can provide more contextual information about shared traits between molecules, where traditional methods only inferred trait matches. Further, it allows researchers to see exactly how, where and why molecule bonds are matched-- offering better insights into the molecule's activity. And this analysis can all be done in a matter of seconds, speeding discovery and lowering costs.

Equally amazing has been the development of this methodology using AI. From an exploratory conversation to start collaboration to a proof of concept took only a little over two months. Accenture and Biogen are now actively seeking new remedies using this method. Indeed, Biogen has recently announced that they have found a new drug to address Alzheimer's, an active field with several pharmaceutical companies finding drugs with promise but that have not been approved for a variety of reasons.

Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport



Join The League!

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

Membership in the League of Women Voters, the most respected and effective grassroots organization in the country, is open to all men and women who are registered voters.

Our members make a visible difference by serving as community leaders using their experience to create positive, lasting change in our communities.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Just fill out the membership form below and mail it to:

LWV PVP, PO Box 2933, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274. Please make checks payable to *LWV PVP* (



Membership Form

Name _____

Name(s) of additional member(s) in household _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (home) _____ Phone (work/day/cell) _____

Email address _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

\$80.00 one member

\$40.00 additional member in the same household.

Dues are tax deductible. LWV PVP is a 501(c)(3) organization.

REMINDER: IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE**Renew now**

Just a reminder that our yearly dues are due the beginning of July each year. These dues support our County, State and National League.

You are automatically a member of all of these leagues. Of the money we collect we keep only about \$5.00 of these dues for our local league. The rest is sent to the other levels as PMPs (per member payments). Remember your monies are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

If you wish to send any additional money, we use our local funds mostly to pay for space for our educational programs. All donations are welcome and appreciated.

Yearly dues are \$80 per member and \$40 for each additional League member in your household.

You may renew your membership [online](#), or mail a check, payable to LWVPVP, to:

LWVPVP
P.O. Box 2933
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

Thank you for your support!

LWV PVP Officers and Board Member Contact Information:

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**League of Women Voters of
PVP P.O. Box 2933
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274**



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BEACH CITIES, PALOS
VERDES PENINSULA/SAN PEDRO AND TORRANCE AREA INVITE
YOU TO ATTEND THE**

**ANNUAL TRILEAGUE MEETING
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2018**



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

HELEN HUTCHISON

PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

THE JOURNEY TO 2020

**LOCATION: THE DEPOT RESTAURANT
KIMONO ROOM
1250 CABRILLO AVENUE, TORRANCE
(310) 787-7501**

**SCHEDULE: 9:30 AM - REGISTRATION
10:00 AM - BRUNCH
11:00 AM - KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

COST: \$35/PER PERSON

**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO LWV PVP/SAN PEDRO
MAIL TO: LWV PVP/SAN PEDRO, P.O. BOX 2933,
PALOS VERDES PENINSULA CA 90274**

RESERVATIONS DUE SEPTEMBER 1ST

QUESTIONS? LWV.PVPSANPEDRO@GMAIL.COM