



Voter

www.lwvpalosverdes.org

(310) 784-7787

September October 2016

Calendar 2016

Wednesday	Sept 14	Board Meeting	Noon	Nell Mirels' House
Saturday	Sept 24	Ballot Measure Briefing	9:30-1:00	Hollenbeck Palms 573 S. Boyle St. LA, 90033
Tuesday	Sept 27	Alternate Date for Ballot Measure Briefing		LA City League Office 3303 Wilshire Blvd. #310 LA, 90010
Wednesday	October 11	Board Meeting	Noon	Nell Mirel's House
Wednesday	October 5	Public Pros & Cons	6-8 PM	YWCA 437 W 9 th St. San Pedro, 90731
T Thursday	October 6	Candidate Forum	7-9 PM	Hesse Park
Saturday	October 8 th	Public Pros & Cons	2-4 PM	San Pedro Library
Sunday	October 9	Public Pros & Cons	2-4 PM	Penn Main Library
Tuesday	October 11	Candidate Forum (for San Pedro, Harbor City, Wilmington and parts of Carson)	TBD	TBD
Wed	October 12	Candidate Forum (Tri-League)	7-9 PM	Toyota Hall Torrance Cultural Arts Torrance City Hall Area

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This Month's Co-Presidents' Message

Katy and I hope you all had a restful summer. Although there were no board meetings in August—we were busy in July with our membership event at Julie Craemer's house and Popovers at the end of July. Both events were well attended and there are a few pictures of our activities in this edition of the Voter. We enjoyed the entertainment of the Penny Royal Players (a musical review of the revolutionary days—complete with costumes) at the event at Julie's. As a result of all our efforts we have several new members. The day was lovely, the food delicious and it was a good time to meet new friends.

At Popovers there were three good workshops and then we were pleased to have Chris Carson (newly elected National President) of the Glendale League as our keynote speaker. It was good to hear her take on what we need to do to increase the impact of League and her main advice was to make sure we opened and acted on emails sent from National this year. As a major election year --we are all watching this national election I think with some amazement. We will need to take action on legislation as it comes up with a new government. Later in this issue you will find some summaries of some of the workshops as well as a summary of the Tri-League kick-off event the end of August with Judge Nash.

Nancy and Jo-Anne are busy with election forums and propositions presentations. If you wish to participate—they can use the help so contact either Nancy Mahr nlmahr@verizon.net, or Jo-Anne Waller jo-annewaller@gmail.com, and they will add you into their plans. We are also trying to keep up our web page so that it is more accurate and current. If you are technically savvy we could use some help for several web pages including Voter's Edge and our Web page and possibly the county page as well. Let me know and I will forward your name to the appropriate parties.

We need some feedback on areas you would like to hear about. Pat Colby and Janet MacLeod will try and put together some programs after the new year about the port. In April we are trying to have a program on mental health with the Tri-Leagues. We have had a request to address gun issues. And you may have some requests – send us your ideas and requests. We also have several board positions empty so if you would like to have a portfolio—again let me know.

Just a gentle reminder, if you haven't paid your 2016-2017 dues please do so. Remember that they are now \$80 a year. Contact Cindy Kondon our Treasurer.

Katy Watkins (310-408-6211) and *Vi Jungerich* (310-541-5092)
Co-Presidents

Judge Michael Nash Addresses Tri-League Kickoff By Pat Colby

Judge Michael Nash, newly appointed Director of L.A. County's Office of Child Protection, was the keynote speaker at the Tri-League Kickoff, Saturday, August 27, 2016 at Torrance's Depot Restaurant.

Appointed by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors in August, 2016, Judge Nash says that he hopes to convene a broad spectrum of agencies and individuals to help change the safety net for abused and neglected children. His \$240,000-a year position was created in response to recommendations made by a special blue ribbon commission appointed after the beating death of 8-year-old Gabriel Fernandez. Though he is not the Child Welfare Czar (the ability to hire/fire or have formal power to move money and resources), he will have the ability to lead conversations among various county departments and community members about new proposals which, ultimately, are approved by the Board of Supervisors. California's massive foster care system is the largest in the nation with about 62,000 in foster care. New York, by contrast, the second next largest system, has approximately 25,000 foster children. L.A. County has 30% of the state's foster youth, making it the largest municipal system in the United States.

So how does Judge Nash attend to certain priorities set for his position: making sure kids are safe, increased transparency in the system and creating a strategic, child-centered plan that is data driven, informed by the best practices and that connects all agencies in the county and sets forth measurable goals?

Prevention, a key priority, is defined by the Judge as first, ensuring that an array of services, accessible to all communities, are in place to prevent children/families from coming into the system and secondly, assisting families at risk to prevent future penetration into the system. This is achieved by coordinating the actions of not only the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) but other entities such as law enforcement, the education system or the health

system. "We need to figure out what piece each of those entities own (and what the gaps are), and how to better coordinate their efforts so that kids don't fall through the cracks and end up dead."

The Welfare of children's health is of great importance. Although limited scientific research exists on the effects of psychotropic drugs on children, those in foster care are prescribed psychotropic drugs at double or quadruple that rate of those who are not in foster care. (Government Accountability Office report). These particular drugs have the power to alter brain function and change mood, cognition and behavior and are used for a variety of mental health issues including depression, schizophrenia and attention deficit disorder. Foster care youth take psychotropic drugs prescribed by a doctor and authorized by the court. A damning state audit released this year, reported that the state and counties "have failed to adequately oversee the prescribing of psychotropics to children in foster care" saddling them with too many meds, inappropriately high dosages and little follow-up care or documentation. As a result of the audit, Sacramento lawmakers have gone far beyond any other state legislature to protect abused and neglected youths from receiving questionable psychiatric care that fails to treat the underlying causes of their trauma. The legislation:

- Requires juvenile courts to order a review of anytime doctors who prescribe certain drug combinations to children age 5 or younger;
- Expands the Medical Board of California's ability to investigate doctors who overprescribe;
- Ensures that counties provide enough effective, non-pharmaceutical therapies to meet foster children's needs.

Judge Nash says L.A. County Courts are the first to establish protocols for drugs prescribed for foster youth. All requests for medications are cycled through the Department of Mental Health where a team of psychiatrists assess the

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relevance of the prescription to the child's medical diagnosis.

The Judge further stated that "There needs to be an assessment tool in place that is properly utilized by different entities and individuals who touch these families. With a good tool (such as child protective analytics—a risk assessment tool), proper training, proper oversight, proper evaluation we can do a better job of minimizing the risk. One challenge is to develop agreements between agencies to share information. Next, we have to up-grade our technology in order to better communicate agency-to-agency."

"The law requires that we make every effort to keep families together, if we can do so safely. I strongly believe the answer lies in families, extended families. Did any of you see the film, "Antwone Fisher"? It is the story of a young man who experienced a horrific childhood in foster care in Cleveland, Ohio. Later in life, he discovers many of his extended family members living in the same neighborhood where he had once been a foster child. Using Family Find Technology, we are able to locate all of a children's relatives, many of whom might share in the care of that child's needs—babysitting, transportation, etc. After extended family is located and evaluated, we could increase by 10-20% those kids who would not be placed in foster care. This approach would also change the image of DCFS, now viewed as an agency that frequently takes children away from families. Under an adjusted model, DCFS could engage with full families, working with them in positive ways, mitigating the foster home only approach. We don't need to have kids age out of the system (particularly those 0-11 years of age); kids need the permanency of the home."

"We will never completely have the dollars or the services to assist those who do age out of the system nor will there ever be sufficient transitional housing available to them. However, we are planning with every agency to provide assistance to these young adults who are often poorly prepared for life outside of the system."

During the question/answer period, Judge Nash acknowledged the importance of the Permanency Partners Program (P3) which specifically addresses the need for permanent families for older youth in long-term foster care with focus on family funding and engagement. Until recently our co-president, Vi Iungerich, worked on P3 cases in the DCFS office in Torrance. Judge Nash also praised the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program which improves the lives of children in the dependency system by pairing them with a trained volunteer advocate who takes five key actions on the child's behalf: advocacy, support, investigation, reporting and recommendation.

Welcome Our New Members!



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Homes for the Homeless—Popovers 2016

By Vi Iungerich

Tonja Boykin, Chief Operating Officer for Skid Row Housing Trust, presented an excellent workshop on the Homeless in Los Angeles. As a major officer for Skid Row housing she is on the forefront of this issue. As in so many areas of concern, Los Angeles has a larger homeless population than most other places. Skid Row Housing now offers over 1800 permanent homes for the chronically homeless—with 27 buildings. This large operation is unique in its emphasis on getting the most needy into housing.

Tonja started her presentation with a video celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Trust. This video gave an overview of the Housing Trust's work, its buildings and the population it serves. In Los Angeles, the latest homeless count on last May 4 gave a population of 46,874 in the county- an increase of 5.7%. The Skid Row Trust started in 1995 and is dedicated to housing the most difficult homeless population with buildings mostly in the Skid Row area. The Trust both buys buildings already in the area and also builds new housing in the area. Their most recent building, Crest Apartments, is the first building that will be outside of the Skid Row area and is located in the San Fernando Valley. Whether the building is new or refurbished all their buildings are built with an eye to earthquake safety, the meeting of current building codes and with community areas available. The Trust is sensitive to historic buildings and often will completely gut the infrastructure of such properties while maintaining their historic facades or parts. New buildings are often architecturally interesting and award winning structures. Most units are studio -like, having small kitchens and baths with simple living spaces.

Serving this difficult population requires unusual supportive services in order to keep residents safely housed. Each unit is for one person. Every resident signs a lease and once admitted to a building—this housing is permanent. As long as residents want to stay and obey the

basic rules—including paying their rent—they are welcome to remain. This Trust was part of the Housing First demonstration project which provided housing for the chronically homeless including those with an addiction problem without requiring the individual to show they were no longer using. This project demonstrated that by providing housing and supportive services first, many of these chronically addicted homeless became stable and were then able to attack their substance abuse. However, it is up to the individual to decide if they want to become “clean”.

So how do these people gather enough income for rent? The property requires that each person pay 30% of their income for rent. If this is only public assistance, then it is still 30%. Many individuals however, qualify for SSI due to some disability or mental illness.

Trained staff helps a person obtain the necessary documents to qualify such as birth certificates, social security cards, medical documentation etc. Once a person obtains their SSI, then he is eligible for housing and again pays 30%. In most buildings, a case worker is assigned to every 5 residents. These case workers are there to help with personal planning, personal problems, and to get them into possible needed services. Usually there is a health clinic or mental health clinic in the building or near-by. Because many are not used to housing rules, the case managers also handle conflicts between residents or the breaking of rules.

Another unique feature of this housing is the emphasis on community. Some buildings have rooftop gardens. Some have community rooms with kitchens for community activities. There may be a gym. Residents are encouraged to socialize with each other and to form friendships. Each building is unique and residents are encouraged to find a building that fits them based on vacancy.

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One question asked at the workshop was how did the businesses in the area feel about the Trust. Tonja said that she approached many of the larger businesses, gave them tours and they wound up not only being supportive but of also putting together welcome gifts of needed household items (pots and pans, linens, etc.) with a personal note of welcome from each gift giver.

Needless to say such an enterprise is not self-sustaining and the Trust has an active fund raising and volunteer program. Tonja ended her presentation by inviting any interested person or group in coming for a tour.

Popovers Workshop Looks at Civil Discourse

The major qualities of civil discourse and how the League of Women Voters, San Luis Obispo County, developed improved civic discourse in local government were the key elements of Sally Seven's Popovers workshop presentation.

In these times, we need to bring civility back into our discourse more than ever; to set standards by which American campaigns and the media hold each other to higher accountability. What, then, is civil discourse? It is courteous, constructive communication characterized by mutual respect, fairness and attentive listening. Why does civility matter? Civil Discourse promotes informed discussion of public issues essential for government bodies and citizens to make good decisions. And to achieve these outcomes, much depends are how a presiding chairperson sets the tone of a meeting. The chair leads by example and encourages others to do the same by showing respect to all in actions, body language and speech; encourages open spirited debates on all facts by contending parties; actively listens and thanks speakers where and when appropriate; never comments on the motivation of a speaker and limits discussion to merits of issues; enforces the rules and allows no disruptions of a meeting

including slanderous, profane or negative personal remarks. Is civility simply politeness? No, it means be tolerant. Listen, don't interrupt. Refrain from sarcasm. Be respectful. Speak in modulated tones. Stick to the issue. Recognize there are two sides. Avoid labels.

The League of Women Voters, San Luis Obispo County, took these concepts into local government this year through its civic discourse campaign. The League developed and printed 10,000 brochures that are, in effect, a primer on civil discourse. The also distributed "I Heart Civic Discourse" pins and buttons. The League presented these guidelines to local government officials and members of the public. The Board of Supervisors and other government and school board officials have received the League's message and actually adopted the concepts for improved discourse. For example, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution that is essentially a pledge to uphold the key principles of civil discourse. League members attend Board meetings though they are only there as observers. The presence of the League wearing their "I 'heart' Civil Discourse" buttons sends a powerful message without a single word being spoken.

In the course of our daily encounters, all of us are encouraged to speak out against violence, prejudice and incivility in all their forms.

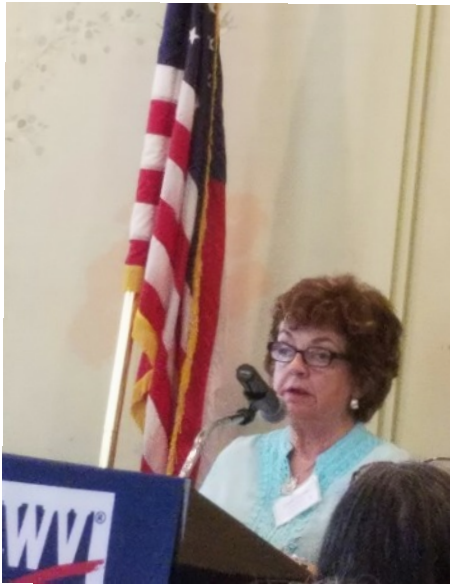


Sally Seven leads Popovers Workshop on Civil Discourse

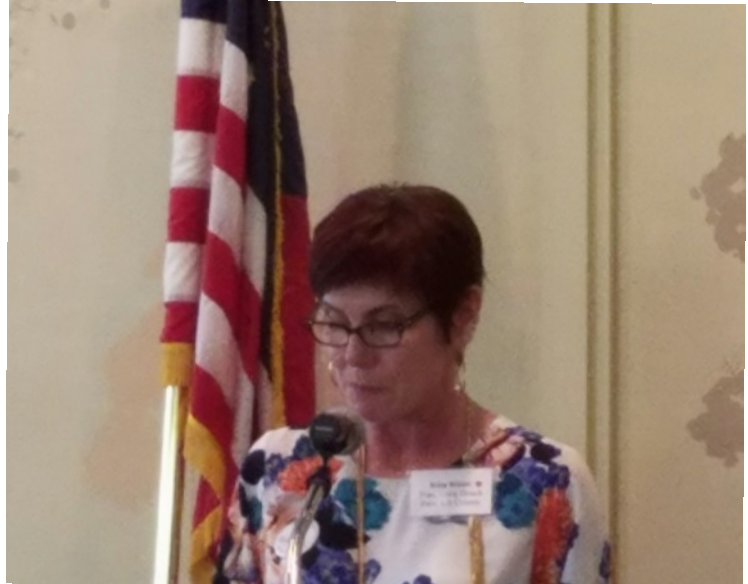
Membership Event at Julie Craemer's Home - July 17, 2016



Popovers in Pasadena - Saturday, July 30, 2016



LWVUS President Chris Carson was the keynote speaker.



LWV LA County President Kim Ritter

Kim Ritter makes presentation to Chris Carson.



LWV members at Popovers sing for Chris Carson.



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.

LWV PVP Officers and Board Member Contact Information:

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