



# LWV Whittier VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Whittier serves Whittier, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Montebello, Pico Rivera,

LWV Whittier 562-947-5818

LWV website [www.whittier.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.whittier.ca.lwvnet.org)

Editor: Ginny Holloway

562-777-4343

January/February 2011

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## LA COUNTY JAIL STUDY

### Whittier Chapter Consensus Meeting

**Wednesday, February 2, 6:45 PM**

**Whittier Public Library**

**7344 S. Washington Ave. , Whittier**

**What do you know about the LA County Jail system, the largest in the United States, with a daily population of almost 20,000 inmates?**

**What improvements need to be made in our County jail system to make time in jail more effective and more rehabilitative?**

Come to the first session of the Whittier Chapter Jail Study consensus meeting on February 2 in the Nixon Room of the Main library.

Learn more about the LA County jail and the problems inmates encounter, as well as the services that the Sheriff's Department provides. What works and what doesn't?

Our Whittier members, **Sheila Hartfield, Ginny Holloway, and Margo Reeg** will be providing information from the study report, and our discussion leader will guide us through the consideration of the several consensus questions devised by the LA County LWV Study Committee and Board.

We will meet again in March to continue the discussion and try to reach our chapter's consensus, which will then be submitted to the County League for their Jail System Study, reporting on overcrowding with focus on recidivism, educational programs, mental health and costs.

## VOTER REGISTRATION



### Mission

*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.*

### Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Whittier in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWV on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

# *President's Message*

**Happy New Year to All.**

Hope your holidays were full of joy and laughter. I am just getting back to "normal" after having family here for the holidays. Oh, the joys of grandchildren!! But I certainly didn't "Do League" for several weeks.

First, I want to encourage everyone to join us at the first Whittier League book discussion group on Wednesday, January 19, at 4 p.m. at Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf at Greenleaf and Wardman. We will be discussing Diane Ravitch's book, The Death and Life of the Great American School System. Jan Baird has my copy and Beverly Walker got one from the County library. Even if you haven't read the book you can join us for the discussion. We hope to read Linda Darling Hammond's The Flat Earth and Education next in preparation for the LWVUS Education study. Several other books have been proposed for discussion, including California Crack-Up by Mark Paul and Joe Mathews who will be at State convention in Ventura in May. A book on the U.S. Supreme Court has also been suggested. We will be involved in several Candidate Forums in January and February in Commerce, Bell, La Habra Heights and SmartVoter outreach to several other area cities. Let me know if you can help. The La Habra Heights forum will be on Tuesday, February 15.

The Whittier League did weigh in on the Whittier Oil Field Drilling question by submitting comments to the draft Environmental Report on December 6. Our comments are included in this VOTER. We will continue our discussion and make a statement at the hearing after the final EIR comes out in the spring. The next big event for the Whittier League is the consensus meeting on the L.A. County Jail Study. The first session will be held at the Whittier Public Library in the Nixon Room on Wednesday February 2 at 6:45 PM. A second session will be held in early March. An article on the Jail Study is in this VOTER.

Our annual membership numbers for the year are determined at the end of January. Now is the time to renew your membership if you have forgotten. We're pleased to be holding our own with at least 60 members. We hope that the Jail Study and the Education Study will motivate you to bring friends to the discussions and ask them to join.

The Redistricting Commission has been sworn in and will begin their work this month. A training session for

League observers of the process, both for state level and county level redistricting hearings will be held at the California Endowment on January 25. I will be going and welcome anyone else who would like to register. Please contact me for information. We are also looking for committee members who will work on the Education Study, The Role of the Federal Government in Education. Materials will be on the website by May. We want to have a local program on how the Federal government money and rules/criteria have affected our local school districts in April. Send me an email if you are interested.

Finally, I hope you will take advantage of the rare opportunity to hear Jean Ross, Executive Director and founder of California Budget Project, speak at the County League Day on Saturday, January 29, at the Rio Hondo Country Club in Downey. She is an excellent speaker and has a very realistic take on what the California budget cuts and revenue extensions will mean for Californians on the lower end of the income scale. We will also be taking a shot at balancing the California budget ourselves using the Budget Game from Next Ten. The registration form is in the previous VOTER and is on the County website at [www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org).

*Margo*

## *Suffragist Members*

**JanBaird**

**Terry Cleary**

**Judy Ennis**

**Joan Ewing**

**Ann Farmer**

**Barbara Franklin**

**Mary Kurosawa**

**Judith Rader**

**Carole Restovich**

**Beverly Walker**

Thanks, ladies, for renewing at the Suffragist level. Your extra contribution helps the general operations of our League.

## Roster Changes

Congratulations Jennifer on your marriage!

Jennifer DeBaca Sandoval

13411 Loumont Street

Whittier, 90601

626-333-3112

JenniferDeBaca@gmail.com



*League Storybank*

### *Kathleen Pompey*

As an active participant in early childhood organizations for the past 30+ years, I met a dynamic and inspiring woman, the late Helen Coffey, who invited me to join my local LWV to extend my work in a field that is primarily women, and to extend my advocacy another step. Although I still remain committed to my primary organization (I am president of the Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children), I have consistently used LWV materials and newsletter articles. My membership has been of great benefit to do just as Helen said it would do. I have gleaned from the wisdom of many vibrant and committed Whittier LWV members and leaders. I enjoy the communication, extract what I need, forward information to others, and keep resources at my fingertips!

### *Loretta Gonzales*

I am a new member of the Whittier League of Women Voters. I am a Pre- Law student at the University of La Verne. I became more familiar with The League of Women Voters by attending their candidate forums. I admired their professional, educational, and nonpartisan analysis of current issues. Soon, I hope to attend their leadership workshops so that I may be able to make presentations on the voters' behalf.



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# An Overview of the Jail Study

Betsey Coffman, League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County, The Los Angeles County Jail System Study

**OVERCROWDING** In this study we have reviewed the overcrowded conditions in the Los Angeles Jail System, and some of its causes and effects. Causes include the numerous delays in the judicial system, which have resulted in the one-year average stay of inmates awaiting trial. Efforts that have been made in L. A. County to expedite cases moving through the Court system have been mentioned previously in this study. In the D.A.'s Early Disposition Program, prosecutors and public defenders agree on cases which can be expedited, with pretrial processing, trials, and sentencing occurring in a timely manner. The Delay Reduction Plan involves judges selecting cases for acceleration and requiring attorneys to bring these cases to trial within 60 days of arraignment (formal charging of an accused person with a crime). However, many more cases need to be expedited to make a real difference in the number of inmates waiting for trials. With current budget shortfalls, resulting in abbreviated court calendars and court-system personnel shortages, the prospects are not good for faster movement of cases. Hopefully, better economic times are in our future. The U.S. judicial system, with its emphasis on fairness and due process, tends to be a slow moving system. Another approach to alleviating jail overcrowding is alternative sentencing. Currently the LASD has a program (Community Based Alternatives to Custody or CBAC) in which sentenced offenders can be electronically monitored and placed in home confinement or work release programs. Sentencing can be to a period of probation, usually with periodic monitoring. L. A. County has a Department of Probation, which currently serves 60,000 adult probationers [County Probation Chief Plans to Retire, Los Angeles Times, 5-27-09, p. A6]. Some convicted violators of drug laws are sentenced to drug rehabilitation programs, in which they learn to avoid use of drugs and alcohol. Similarly, some domestic violence offenders and some mentally ill persons convicted of crimes can be sentenced to outside intervention or treatment programs. As research continues on intervention programs and factors which lead to success are better defined, other types of offenders could be

sentenced to non-jail rehabilitation. Los Angeles County's plans to renovate its Jail System could also reduce overcrowding, with the additional benefits of increasing safety and efficiency. The Revised Jail Plan would not only increase beds, but would provide podular cell or dormitory units at three more detention sites (Sybil Brand, Pitchess Detention Center, and Mira Loma). These units provide for surveillance of all inmates by staff and have large open areas for group activities (e.g. rehabilitation programs, classes, and eating) which enable inmates to move from cells or beds to activity areas without staff escorts. (Podular units are already in place at Twin Towers and Century Regional Detention Center.) In addition the Plan calls for discontinuing inmate housing in the older part of Men's Central Jail, and providing common rooms for programs and eating, as well as adjoining physical recreation areas for inmates in the newer section of MCJ.

**HEALTH CARE** The Jail System strives to fulfill its obligations of providing emergency and basic health care to inmates, and even goes beyond basic in providing diagnostic services, a licensed inpatient facility, and access to L. A. County-USC Medical Center for very acute or surgical conditions. Still, complaints about health services abound. The most frequent complaints are about lack of response to requests for medical care. When inmates are admitted, they are asked a routine set of questions to assess security risk, life conditions, and medical need. If suicidal thoughts are reported, jail policy requires immediate evaluation by a Jail Mental Evaluation (JME) team, who are likely to place the inmate under observation. Inmates in need of urgent medical attention are held for further evaluation by medical personnel. All incoming prisoners are administered a medical/mental health screening questionnaire by licensed health personnel or trained facility staff and medical referrals can be written at this point. [PARC 25<sup>th</sup> Semiannual Report, July 2008, p.16-18; PARC, 26<sup>th</sup> Semiannual Report, Feb. 2009, pp. 18-22] The LASD website has instructions for family members or friends on how to report medical or mental illness conditions for inmates. Once admitted to housing, inmates may request medical attention. However, delays or absence of response to medical care requests continue to occur, as evidenced by complaints to the ACLU [aclu-sc.org/jails/]. PARC, reported progress in

## Jail Study (continued)

mental illness conditions for inmates. Once admitted to housing, inmates may request medical attention. However, delays or absence of response to medical care requests continue to occur, as evidenced by complaints to the ACLU [aclu-sc.org/jails/]. PARC, reported progress in the timely provision of medical care to women in its 2009 report [*Ibid.*, p.69] but for the much larger number of male inmates housed in various jails in downtown L.A. or in the northern part of the County, lack of response is still a major problem. PARC has recommended that the Jail System seek accreditation by the National

Commission on Correctional Health Care, which sets standards for jails. These standards include timely response to prisoner requests for medical care – within 24 hours of time of request on weekdays, and 72 hours on weekends [PARC, 25<sup>th</sup> Semiannual Report, July 2008, p. 14]. 2005, p. 109] Dr. Kupers, the psychiatrist retained by the ACLU, reported large gaps in mental health services -- frequent transfer of mentally ill inmates to the general population, victimization of the mentally ill, isolation of inmates with mental illness which exacerbated their psychiatric conditions, and lack of programming. His recommendations included expanding mental health services – more JME team efforts, more substance abuse treatment, more programs, more training of deputies in interacting with mentally disturbed inmates, more robust monitoring, and more post-release planning. EDUCATIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS According to Sheriff Baca, it is a fallacy that time in jail rehabilitates -- the day someone comes to jail is the day his or her educational program should begin [Sheriff Lee Baca, talk to LWV of L.A. County, Pasadena, CA, July 27, 2009]. And research evidence has shown that effective programs can reduce recidivism. The L. A. Jail System offers a range of educational programs -- basic academic, subject-oriented academic, vocational, and social (e.g. treatment or intervention, designed to break a cycle of dysfunctional behavior). Examples of the latter include GOGI (Getting Out by Going In) and the IMPACT drug treatment program. The new School Module, offered by the Hacienda-La Puente USD at the women's jail, involves an entire module of inmates participating in 30 hours per week of classroom aca-

demics plus homework. This program has social benefits as well, with inmate reports of feeling part of an educational community and having increased confidence in what they can accomplish [PARC, 26<sup>th</sup> Semiannual Report, Feb. 2009, pp. 107-112]. The biggest problems in regard to educational programs appear to be access – inmates not knowing about the programs, and pretrial detainees, high-security and mentally ill inmates often not permitted to participate. In addition, the short stays of some inmates limit their education opportunities. The Jail System CTU (Community Transition Unit), a comparatively new service formed about 10 years ago, helps inmates plan for release and has referral arrangements with several “outside” community organizations. It is staffed by 18 Custody Assistants who have been trained for this particular service.

A number of public and private agencies working in criminology and related fields are currently offering grants or developing models for re-entry services. Preliminary evaluations have shown drops in recidivism and resulting cost savings to counties [National Association of Counties and Bureau of Justice Assistance, Reentry for Safer Communities, Sept. 2008, p. 3], but it is too soon to reliably judge the effectiveness of these programs. The LASD, through its CTU, has received grant funding from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to form a coalition of local public and private agencies to “develop a strategic plan to support effective collaboration in the design and delivery of innovative offender reentry programming, as part of continued efforts to reduce recidivism and increase public safety” [PARC, 26<sup>th</sup> Semiannual Report, pp. 118-119].

basis for discussion and policy considerations. We conclude with a quote reported by the Vera Institute of Justice from former Minnesota Warden James Burton: “Security and control – given necessities in a prison environment – only become a reality when dignity and respect are inherent in the process” [www.vera.org, Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons]. Burton's philosophy seems helpful when a society must make decisions about criminal justice.

(Continued)

## Jail Study (Continued)

**COSTS** The costs of maintaining 19,000 prisoners in the Jails are, of necessity, high. Inmates must be housed, clothed, fed, escorted, watched, and treated when they are sick. An inmate education program is mandated by the California Code of Regulations [Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities, 2005, pp. 22-23]. Use of inmate payments for phone calls and food items, as well as marketing products from vocational education workshops is a commendable efficiency. The volunteers (e.g. chaplains, members of AA and NA) who work with inmates help to relieve the public's financial burden. And, with the increased success of rehabilitation programs (e.g. those incorporating effective practices), these programs could be cost-effective in the long run by reducing recidivism and further incarceration. A FINAL NOTE This study is intended to familiarize League members with the County Jail System and provide a

basis for discussion and policy considerations. We conclude with a quote reported by the Vera Institute of Justice from former Minnesota Warden James Burton: "Security and control – given necessities in a prison environment – only become a reality when dignity and respect are inherent in the process" [www.vera.org, Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons]. Burton's philosophy seems helpful when a society must make decisions about criminal justice.

**LWVWHITTIER-- OIL DRILLING QUESTIONS** *Statement submitted to the City on December 6, 2010 responding to the Draft Environmental Report*

*League positions from the state, national and county Leagues were added as justification.*

**Concerns:** 1. City of Whittier is the primary responsible party for monitoring all of the mitigations set out in the Mitigation Monitoring Plan for Air Quality and shares responsibility for monitoring all mitigations of Biological Resources with the Habitat Authority and the oil company. How will the City implement this monitoring process? Will the City also enforce the recommendations of the EIR and ensure that all requirements are met? Will the monitoring of this oil drilling project require the hiring of additional personnel?

Under which department will the monitoring be placed? How will the City pay for this oversight? From the oil royalties?

2. Is Matrix a responsible company that is proactive in addressing complaints of noise, odors, flaring restrictions and safety issues? Has the City or the EIR company surveyed other communities in which Matrix operates wells to determine how many complaints have been recorded and how Matrix resolved the complaints? Is Matrix proactive in reporting emissions data to the SCAQMD and in following restrictions on flaring?

3. The primary reason for pursuing the reopening of the Whittier Oil Field is to generate revenue for the City. What other means of generating revenue have been considered and investigated. What are the costs and environmental consequences of these other revenue sources?

4. In order to reduce the carbon footprint of the city we should be burning less fossil fuel. Has the city conducted a study of the costs and environmental benefits/impacts of installing renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and windmills on roofs and hills?

5. Because air emissions will exceed limits for the air basin, offsets will have to be purchased to satisfy New Source Review and RECLAIM requirements. Will the City be responsible for purchasing the offsets or will Matrix?

6. Flaring of toxic gases and gases not suitable for use by SoCal Gas for heating is restricted by the SCAQMD. What are the gases being flared and what products are emitted into the air from the flaring process? Burning the gases is safer than allowing the gases to escape into the atmosphere, but what are the local effects and risks of products of those flared gases?

7. The League of Women Voters is concerned primarily with the environmental impacts associated with Air Quality and Biological Resources. We are also concerned about the risks associated with earthquake faults and with pumping of contaminated water back into the earth. There is a risk of polluting groundwater from pumping water into the ground to force oil up and in re-pumping water that is contaminated. (Continued)

8. The City has indicated that it owns a piece of land contiguous with the Habitat Preserve that can be used to replace the 7 acres that will be removed from the Preserve for the oil drilling and operations sites. Does that land provide the types of habitat for wildlife--birds, rodents, and mammals that will replace the area removed? Will that land facilitate animal movement through the corridor? Will the oil operations create significant disturbances that will disrupt migration through the corridor?

9. Oil is a nonrenewable resource with many current uses. However, the primary use is for fuel for transportation. But, petroleum is also the base for making many pharmaceuticals and plastics. There is a good argument for preserving reservoirs of oil for the future so that succeeding generations will have feedstock from which to make vital drugs and other products that can't be made from other materials. Alternative fuels and more fuel efficient transportation should be promoted as well as conservation. **Is it wise to deplete a finite resource today when the need for petroleum in the future may be much greater?** *Ruth Kadota and Margo Reeg have copies of the Draft EIR on CD which members may borrow. It is also on the City of Whittier.org website under Mineral Resource Extraction Plan.*

**Whittier Oil Field Tour** -Margo Reeg On November 6 a group of members accompanied Councilman Bob Henderson and three Habitat Preserve Rangers on a tour of the proposed Whittier Oil Drilling site off Catalina Avenue. Henderson showed us the consolidated location for the underground bunkers in which the oil drilling and processing would be conducted. This site is over 1000 feet further from residences and schools than the recommended location. He also walked us to the location of the former drilling pads, removed by Chevron in the 1990s, which can be seen from the Arroyo Pescadero Trail. Then the rangers drove us along Canada Canyon on an old Chevron road from which we could see capped former wells to a point above the Savage Canyon landfill from which we spotted the power lines along the Skyline Trail and viewed the exit route the oil trucks and workers would use along the west side of the landfill to Penn Street. Henderson and the rangers noted that white patches along the road were places where the Habitat Preserve researchers had put scent traps to use

in tracking animals. They also pointed out areas in which new gnatcatcher habitat would be planted and where retaining walls, sound walls, and fire breaks would be located. The tour proved very informative and gave members a much better grasp of the area in which oil drilling could be resumed.

**Sycamore Canyon Oil Field** After Thanksgiving several members joined Ted Snyder for an informal look at the Matrix Oil Drilling site in Sycamore Canyon off Workman Mill Road. Matrix had recently begun drilling two new wells at that location where five wells are currently pumping. Because the oil pumping and oil drilling processes were both underway, we were able to experience the noise level along the hiking trails in the canyon and later at the homes along the ridge above the canyon to the south. At one point the noise level dropped significantly and then later resumed. The oil drilling assembly is visible from the hiking trail for probably one-half mile and is also visible from several homes on Grande Vista in the Rideout area and Tierra Antigua off Workman Mill. Shielding material has been added to the upper portion of the rig to dampen sound. During the last year Matrix had to flare natural gas emerging with the oil because the mixture was not up to the requirements of Southern California Gas Co. which purchases the gas and carries it off in service pipes. They later switched to storing the gas in tanks onsite rather than flaring it. Some residents are concerned about the combustion products of the flare. Another aesthetic and wildlife preservation activity is the construction of barriers along the stream which runs down the canyon between the road and the well site to prevent construction debris and soil from clogging the stream. The walking tour and the information shared with us by Ted Snyder, who has lived above the well site for many years, helped fill us in on some of the issues experienced by homeowners. Some resent the constant background noise which obliterates the song of frogs in the morning and evening. One comment Ted added referred to the time when an active well existed in a parallel with its gate on Tierra Antigua. He noted that during the many years that the well was producing, he was never bothered by trucks or noise. All agreed that the two walking tours gave them a much better perspective on the oil drilling proposal. -Margo Reeg

**Our ADVERTISERS**

This space is reserved for members and friends of the League who want to advertise in the VOTER.

To place an ad in the VOTER please call Margo Reeg at 562-947-5818 (\$50 per year for a business card-sized space)

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Membership in LWVW includes membership in all levels of League: Whittier, California, Los Angeles County, and United States.

Dues:

- Member \$55
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Household Member \$25
- Suffragist Member \$90
- Student \$20

Please make check payable to LWV Whittier

**INTERNET RESOURCES**

- LWV Whittier [www.whittier.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.whittier.ca.lwvnet.org)
- LWV California [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org)
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- California Budget Project [www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org)
- LWVC Ed Fund site [www.cavotes.org](http://www.cavotes.org)
- CA Legislative Analyst [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov)

Many Voices, One Vision





League of Women Voters of Whittier

13611 Walnut Street

Whittier, CA 90602



## Calendar

### January

- Mon. 17**      **Martin Luther King , Jr. Birthday (observed)**
- Wed. 19**      **4 pm Book Discussion at Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf**
- Thurs. 20**     **5-8 pm Commerce City Council Forum**  
**Commerce Senior Center**
- Tues. 25**     **9:30-2 Redistricting Observer Training California Endowment**
- Sat. 29**      **9:30 -2 League Day –Can California’s Budget Be Balanced?**  
**Rio Hondo Event Center**      10627 Old River School Road, Downey

### February

- Wed. 2**      **6:45-9 Jail Study Consensus Meeting Whittier Library Nixon Room**
- Mon. 14**     **HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY**
- Tues. 15**    **7:30-9 La Habra Heights Council Forum LHH City Hall 1245 Hacienda Rd.**

### March

- Sat. 29**      **9:00 – Noon LA County League Convention in Long Beach**  
**Speaker on Privatization of Services in Local Government**