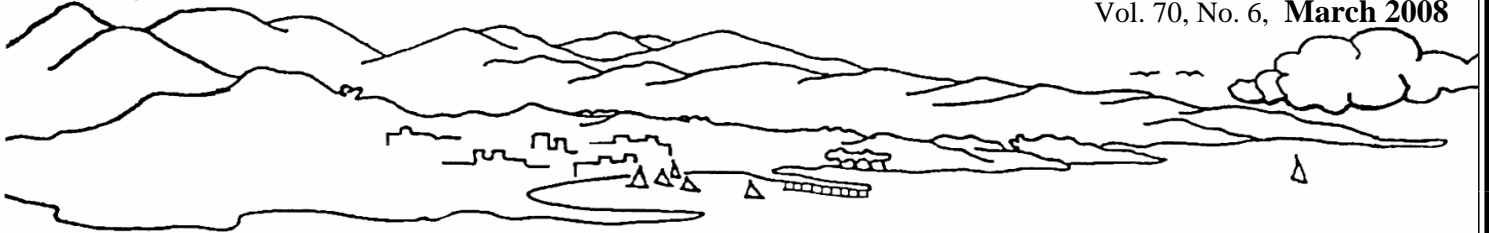


Channel **VOTER**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Serving South Santa Barbara County

Vol. 70, No. 6, March 2008



League Phone/Fax: 965-2422

Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>

MARCH COMMUNITY FORUM:

The California Voters FIRST Redistricting Initiative

Wednesday, February 20, 2008 12:15 to 2 p.m. - Louise Lowry Davis Community Center

De La Vina & Victoria Streets

Brown bag; free and open to the public

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The League supports the California Voters FIRST redistricting initiative and will participate in signature gathering and the campaign to pass it in November 2008. This reform will enable voters to choose their legislators and eliminate the conflict of interest that occurs when legislators draw the lines and choose their constituents.

Every League member will receive a petition in the mail. Please sign your petitions, get two other family members, friends, or colleagues to sign, and return them to the LWVC office in Sacramento. We are also seeking volunteers to circulate petitions in the community. Our grass-roots participation is essential!

At our March Community Forum, we will learn about redistricting and what reforms are needed, as well as about the initiative itself. We have invited two distinguished speakers.

Tracy Westen is founder, Vice-Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) in Los Angeles. Formed in 1983, CGS is a nonprofit organization that researches and develops public policy and communications reforms to improve the processes of democratic governance. Westen is an authority on redistricting reform. He is also a native Santa Barbaran, so we are especially pleased to welcome him back home to speak to us.

Chris Carson serves as Government Director on the Board of the League of Women Voters of California. She brings a historian's perspective and over 20 years of League experience, and will tell us about the initiative, as well as what we can do to help achieve this crucial reform to the government process in California. She lives in Burbank, and spoke to us at our Immigration Study forum last fall.

Linda Phillips, President

MARCH DISCUSSION UNITS: CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The challenge: How do we get the citizenry engaged in the governance, finance, and reform of California's educational system—not exactly the most enthralling subject, but so important to the future of our society. Your Education Committee members will be joining you in your unit meetings to explore ways to meet this challenge. The LWVC Education Committee has been preparing a tool kit that will help to present these issues in such a way as to engage others in this effort. We will try this kit out together to see if we think it will work. We also will need your feedback on the February 20 forum on “Closing the Achievement Gap.” We hope to see you at the unit of your choice.

*Your Education Committee - Marge Gordon, Roxana Anson, Diane Harmon (new member)
Ann Lorimer, Bill Marks, Jean Reiche, Dorothy Semmel, Irene Stone*

From the President's Desk...

How the League Makes Decisions

The question often comes up: How does LWV make decisions on issues? The League studies policy issues - usually for at least a year, and often the study process takes two full years or more. During this time, whether the study is local, for a state League, or for LWVUS, each member is given an opportunity to learn about the issues and to participate in making the decision on what our position will be. We endeavor to reach a consensus on the issue. Grassroots agreement on positions is one of the League's greatest strengths.

What is consensus? To quote LWVC's study guide, consensus is "substantial member agreement reached through group discussion... Consensus is the sense of the group rather than merely a majority opinion." After the member discussions and input, the study committee analyzes the responses to their questions on various aspects of the issue, and whether consensus has been reached on each aspect. From the member consensus, the committee develops a position statement. This statement must be approved by the board, and is usually adopted by the next convention or annual meeting. After board approval, the position becomes the League's basis for action on the issue.

As an example, we are in the middle of the first LWVUS study in 15 years. LWVSB held informational meetings and consensus discussions on immigration last year, and as reported in the December *Channel Voter*, compiled our



members' answers to the consensus questions. Local Leagues all around the country have done this, and have sent in their input to LWVUS. Now the national study committee must do the difficult job of figuring out whether there is a consensus, and formulating a position statement based on it.

It's important to note that our local answers to the questions are *not* yet the consensus. They are merely the input from a small part of the grassroots. We must wait for the national position before taking any action or making any

statements.

Most of the League's positions are written broadly enough to cover a great variety of specific issues, as well as changing circumstances. Many national positions may be applied on the state and local levels (health care reform is one such position), and many state positions also apply locally (mental health is an example). Our local positions (such as that on local planning), however, can't be used by other Leagues, and must not conflict with state or national positions.

The League's advocacy must always be based on our positions. We can't support or oppose measures on which we have no position; and in some cases, we may have two applicable positions that would suggest opposite responses to the measure. But when we do decide to act, it's never in a vacuum or just because we think an issue is important. We are using our positions - ultimately, the results of that grassroots consensus process - to influence public policy.

Linda Phillips, President

THANKS FOR HELP WITH THE FEBRUARY ELECTION

Many of our local League members worked to get out the vote and to prepare voters for the February 5 Election. The speakers bureau, headed by Susan Shank, gave talks on the propositions; Lesley Alexander kept the SmartVoter website up-to-date; and members staffing the office handled inquiries from prospective voters. In addition, Jan O'Dowd and a number of League volunteers she recruited worked the polls for two precincts. Thanks to all who contributed their time and talents!

*Janet Graham, Vice-President,
Election Services*

STATE COUNCIL AND NATIONAL CONVENTION

LWVSB will have delegates at each of these important leadership events. If you would like to go, please contact the League office.

LWVC Leadership Council 2008: Bridge to the Future, Saturday, May 17 – Sunday, May 18, Sacramento.

Invest a weekend, a day, or just a few hours in being the best leader you can be! This year's Council has something for everyone: Engage in lively conversation with active, informed women and men from across the state. Dive into the topics you care about: health care; mock elections, member recruitment; voters service, education, and more!

Not a member? Attend workshops and learn the value of League training and networking at one of our biggest leadership events all year – you'll be hooked! More information is available at www.lwvc.org or contact Trudy Jarratt, LWVC Vice President, at evp@lwvc.org.

LWVUS Convention 2008: Reaching New Heights Together, Friday, June 13 – Tuesday, June 17, Portland, OR.

The Channel Voter is published eight times a year, monthly except for January, June, July, and August, by the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters, 328A E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL ACTION IN SANTA BARBARA

The Impact of the County Budget Shortfall on Mental Health Services

This month's social policy column highlights the situation facing Santa Barbara County as it responds to demands on shrinking revenues and its impact on mental health services. Our new representative to the Public Policy Committee of the Santa Barbara Mental Health Association, Emily Allen, is in a unique position to report on these developments. As a community advocate for the homeless and an attorney, she has a firm grasp of these issues. Following a brief summary of the current budget situation in relation to mental health services, we have Emily's statement of what is at stake for those served by the Santa Barbara County Department of Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS).

The Present Situation

The cascading effect of declining state and county revenues on budget allocations in all areas of government is particularly acute for the maintenance of services for those with mental illness. In addition to facing cuts in next year's state and county budgets, the ADMHS is faced with resolving a \$7 million budget shortfall. At the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 5, a \$2.3 million allocation to cover part of the current deficit was approved. In a compromise reached at the meeting, approval of the balance was delayed until the March 11 meeting, to give Dr. Ann Detrick, the newly appointed director of ADMHS, time to submit a plan for budget restructuring and department redesign. The February 5 Board of Supervisors meeting was attended by supporters of programs and services for those served by ADMHS, including many nonprofit organizations that contract with the county to provide shelter, therapy, rehabilitation, and health services to clients and their families. Emily Allen, speaking on behalf of the homeless, summarized the social policy changes and needs from the perspective of consumers of mental health services, and called for the following policy changes:

- An increase in the County General Fund contribution to ADMHS. The county only provides ADMHS with 2.1 percent of its revenue. The mean percentage investment by California counties in their mental health services is

close to 6 percent.

- Long term fiscal planning that considers the impact that cuts to ADMHS will have on other departments. Without treatment and housing more people will end up using costly resources, such as emergency rooms, psychiatric health facilities, out-of-county locked institutes for mental disease, and jails.
- The county acting as a partner to cities and nonprofits in order to leverage all possible federal, state, and foundation support.
- More affordable housing for people who need supportive services and for people who are able to live independently. Additionally, plans that preserve the existing inventory of affordable housing with supportive services.
- Related policy concerns include: Medication alone is not sufficient--consumers also need access to group and individual counseling; case managers must have manageable workloads; provision of programs and services based on best practices; provision of programs and services based on preventing crisis and bringing about recovery; enlist active engagement of families and friends who want to see the system work; assure real consumer empowerment. This means consumers are always at the table when decisions are being made ("nothing about us without us!"). This also means working with consumers to help them fully realize their ability to participate in all aspects of their community (work, volunteer, political activism, etc).

What You Can Do. LWVC policies emphatically support adequate funding to meet mental health needs. We urge you to get involved and write, as an individual, to your county supervisor and ask for full funding of mental health services. You can also attend the next Board of Supervisors meeting on March 11, 2008 and voice your support, as a citizen of Santa Barbara County, for efforts to adequately fund ADMHS.

Dorothy Semmel, Social Policy Director

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Do you know all you should about SB 840? It's the single-payer plan for health care for all, endorsed by LWVC. You can learn more on Sunday, March 2, at 3:00 p.m., at Girls, Inc., 5315 Foothill Rd., Carpinteria.

COASTAL ISSUES

The January meeting of the South Central Coast Environmental Task Force was rained out and instead will occur on March 7. So you will have another opportunity to participate in, or just listen to, discussion of coastal issues reported by the representatives of tri-county Leagues. We will also consider Transfer of Development Rights programs and how successful they might - or might not - be in preserving undeveloped areas. Attendees usually stay on for lunch at a local restaurant.

Jean Holmes, South Central Coast Environmental Task Force Coordinator

WATCH FOR THE NEW HEIGHT LIMIT INITIATIVE

Coming soon from a League member near you—a petition to lower the height limit for buildings in Santa Barbara's downtown historic district! The League has endorsed this measure for the November 2008 ballot. We believe that this is going to be necessary to control a proliferation of overly tall, bulky buildings.

By the first of March we expect to have petitions ready for signing by all registered voters in the City of Santa Barbara. This is a true grassroots effort, created by some retired planning commissioners and supported by the League, Allied Neighborhood Association, and Citizens Planning Association. All three groups will circulate the petitions, but you can only sign once.

The present height limit, contained in the city charter, is 60 feet for buildings in the commercial area. The recent Chapala developments have convinced many people that a lower height limit is needed. The former League president who helped put the 60-foot height limit into the

charter, Virginia Robinson, agrees that it is time to reduce that limit.

The initiative proposes to limit heights to 40 feet in the city's historic district, El Pueblo Viejo. All other commercial zones would be limited to 45 feet. Other areas of the city would retain the same height limits that they have now. All of the residential and multi-family areas would remain the same.

In this issue we are including some Questions and Answers on page 5 about the proposed initiative that may help you understand it. We would like all of you who live in the City of Santa Barbara to sign a petition, so look for them at a League meeting or at various tables around town.

Connie Hannah, First Vice-President for Local Action

THE RESTRUCTURING OF PLAN SANTA BARBARA

On January 3, at a Santa Barbara City Planning Commission (PC) meeting, members of the commission and the public expressed frustration that Plan Santa Barbara (the General Plan Update) was taking so long and that major issues were not being addressed in a timely fashion. John Jostes and Addison Thompson were appointed to come up with a new process, and they have now unveiled a new schedule for the General Plan Update. Unfortunately we have no dates for these meetings, just seasons.

Phase II

Early spring. A Land Use Development Trends Report will be made available to the public. Two weeks to 10 days later there will be an important Planning Commission Work Session. The PC expects public comment at this time. Later in the spring, Development Trends Workshops will be held for the public, including both an evening and a Saturday workshop.

By early summer, staff will prepare a Draft Policy Options Report. Public workshops will follow, again including an evening and a Saturday session, on Draft Policy Preferences. The staff will then write a Recommended Policy Preferences Report. In the early fall, the PC will hold a hearing on it and make recommendations to the city council. This will be followed by a Council Direction on the General Plan Amendments, the Housing Element, and Land Use Element and Map, and the staff will then initiate them. There will be a Notice of Preparation and an EIR Scoping Hearing.

Phase III will take place from the spring of 2009 to the winter of 2010.

What will happen with this General Plan Update is anybody's guess. Questions and concerns have been raised by the League, Citizens Planning Association, and Allied Neighborhood Association. Will the public have a real role or not?

Santa Barbara's previous General Plan determined that living within our resources would allow an optimum build-out of 40,005 residential units, a number we are now approaching. This raises the question: Will we become a high-density community, or will we maintain our traditional slow growth policies?

Other questions include: Will we be able to keep any land for manufacturing? Will our Coastal Zone become a wealthy enclave? Will the downtown and transit corridors, even in neighborhoods, become high density zones? Will we have many more luxury condos? What will happen with affordable housing when money from the Redevelopment Agency ends? What about workforce housing and will we keep giving developers bonus units to build it? What about our resource constraints and our infrastructure?

If you want to have your voice heard, go to the public workshops and the Planning Commission meetings. For more information, including important dates of meetings, go to <http://www.YouPlanSB.org>.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

BUILDING HEIGHTS INITIATIVE - *Questions and Answers*

What will this Initiative do?

The proposed initiative will amend the City of Santa Barbara Charter to change building heights in the commercial and manufacturing zones from 60 feet to 45 feet, and in El Pueblo Viejo (the historic district), from 60 feet to 40 feet.

What areas of the city are covered by this Initiative?

It will affect only the commercial and manufacturing areas of the city, since the Upper State Street area, the Coastal Zone, and the R-3 multi-family zones already have height limitations of 45 feet.

Why do we need lower building heights?

The proposed initiative will protect our important historic and cultural resources in El Pueblo Viejo (EPV) from being overshadowed and dwarfed by new development. The proposed height limits will protect public views as well as the small scale ambience of the city and other qualities that make Santa Barbara unique and famous throughout the world. The existing height limit of 60 feet has increased land values, thus making it harder to preserve or develop lower buildings.

Why do we need this change now?

In addition to the two very large new buildings on Chapala, there are two more in construction and ten more in the pipeline. This is a big change from the past, when, with rare exceptions, tall buildings were public buildings, such as the Court House, County Administration Building, and Cottage Hospital. Historic buildings are being dwarfed by proposed developments.

Why was 45 feet chosen and not a lower number?

The new limit of 45 feet is reasonable. As was said before, this will bring the commercial and manufacturing areas into conformity with the Upper State Street area, the Coastal area, and the R-3 multi-family zones. The present 60-foot limit is problematic in the commercial and manufacturing areas and in El Pueblo Viejo. There is no reason to change the limits in other areas, which have not been shown to have problems and have not received complaints.

Will the Initiative change the height limits for single family and two-family residential areas?

No. The Initiative states that building heights are limited to 30 feet in areas zoned for single family and two-family residences.

What is the impact on affordable housing?

Taller buildings are more expensive to build and thus make luxury penthouse and expensive development options inevitable. Tall buildings do not lead to the development of affordable housing. According to a Building Industry Association spokesman, building high with small units is the most expensive type of development.

It is important to know that current mixed-use projects and other projects subject to City Inclusionary Zoning have created mainly luxury units, with only 15% workforce housing units. Workforce housing is for those making above 120% of median income. Only the Housing Authority, the Redevelopment Agency, and nonprofits provide housing for those making under 120% of median income. Median income is slightly over \$60,000.

What is the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District?

Santa Barbara is often defined by its historic character, reflected in the Spanish-style architecture of its historic buildings. The city established the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District, which includes the downtown, central business district, civic center, and nearby areas, to preserve and protect the area where many of the most historic buildings are concentrated.

Why can't the current design review boards deal with this problem

The city cannot legislate good design. Even though the city has design guidelines, the design boards and planning commission approved the two large projects on Chapala Street that have drawn much criticism, even from one of the developers.

The design review boards (Historic Landmarks Commission and Board of Architectural Review) and the Planning Commission need the change to regulate heights on all projects in a fair and equitable way. At present, proposed projects are treated on a case by case basis with differing results.

Why are lower buildings more sustainable?

The proposed initiative will protect solar access, which is now recognized as an important factor in sustainability. Lower buildings with lower ceilings require fewer materials and less energy to heat and cool, leading to less emission of greenhouse gases.

When will this Initiative be on the Ballot?

If 4,200 signatures are collected from registered city voters, this initiative will be on the November 4, 2008 ballot.

How many signatures need to be gathered to put this initiative on the ballot and what is the time frame? To be safe we need to gather 6,000 signatures by May 1.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant



SANTA BARBARA RANCH/NAPLES PROJECT HEATS UP

Please read about our March 21 fundraiser for the Naples Coalition on page 7. As you will see, there is much work to be done, and money is needed. The Naples Coalition has been working for a number of years on this project, but everything is now coming to a head.

Review by the Planning Commission started with informational workshops, because the project is so large and complex. On January 2, at an all-day briefing on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR), its author, John Larson of the URS Corporation, and county staff members went through the different sections, pointing out the major issues. The League has a DVD of this meeting, if you want to see it on your computer.

The Planning Commission will now hold informational workshops as follows:

April 3: Special Workshop on Policy Consistency with focus on Naples Planned Development District, Agricultural Conservation Easement, and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance.

The League is especially interested in the policy consistency part of this hearing. We are concerned that the only way this project can be rendered consistent with Local Coastal Plan policies and County Land Use policies is to amend the policies. Usually a planned development district, with its standards for heights, size of structures, etc, is developed before a specific project is proposed, to ensure that it is consistent with county land use policies. The Naples Planned Development District, however, was not developed first, but was tailor-made to fit the project. Instead of conforming to the Williamson Act, the project is seeking a conservation easement. While state law allows this change, it is very complex and will have to be approved by the California Department of Resources.

The TDR Ordinance has had a life of its own. After a TDR Study, TDR Working Group meetings, a Revised Study, a Planning Commission hearing and a Board of Supervisors hearing, the Board of Supervisors has approved the most pro-developer arrangement possible. The County Counsel is in the process of drafting this into

a formal ordinance.

May 5: Special Workshop on Resource Constraints with focus on Biology, Topography, Cultural Resources and Water Supply. This meeting should be very interesting, as the different Chumash groups, including the Santa Ynez band, have been very actively commenting on this project.

May 29: Special Workshop on Visual Resources, with focus on Design Development, Visual Simulations, and Central Board of Architectural Review Proceedings.

June 5: Response to RDEIR Comments. This should be interesting, as there were over 500 pages of comments.

Finally, the actual deliberation stage for this project is scheduled to begin in June. Recommendations by the Planning Commission to the Board of Supervisors will follow the sequential hierarchy from broad legislative actions down to individual development permits. These project hearings are scheduled for June 30, July 10, and July 21.

All of this process is happening within the timetable of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the county and the developer. Under the MOU the developer is processing a project that is smaller than he wants, and he is threatening to do without the MOU. The county appears overly eager to approve the project, because they see its coordinated approach as an improvement over other options the developer might choose, such as selling off individual lots. Moreover, this project would resolve potential litigation that the MOU has put on hold.

Look for the developer to hang in there to get entitlements to the inland part of the project. Entitlements for the coastal part will take longer, as they are subject to approval by the Coastal Commission. The Naples Coalition is committed to reducing the size of the project and ensuring the best deal possible, with the fewest impacts.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

IN MEMORIAM

We regret to announce the death of LWVSB member Richard Bennett, who died on January 4. He is survived by his wife, Pat, who is also a League member.



THE NAPLES COALITION'S 3RD ANNUAL CASH FOR THE COAST BENEFIT CONCERT

Features Friends of the Naples Coalition with special guests: Kenny Loggins, Karla Bonoff & Kenny Edwards, Glen Phillips, Jonathan McEuen, MoJoW and the Vibration Army, Rain Perry .

LOBERO THEATER ~ Friday, MARCH 21, 2008 ~ 7:00 PM

Tickets for this year's CASH FOR THE COAST will go on sale at 12:00 (noon) Saturday, February 16 at the Lobero box office (805) 963-0761 or (888) 4LOBERO (888-456-2376) and at www.lobero.com.

A limited number of premium reserved seats are available for \$75 for those patrons who wish to attend the concert and the after-show musical jam and dance party with the artists while enjoying hors d'oeuvres, a dessert buffet and a no-host bar. All other reserved seats are available at \$50. The Lobero Theater adds a \$3 facilities charge to all tickets

SAVE THE DATES

Sunday, April 27:

The Santa Barbara League's **Annual Garden Party** will be held at QAD (the same lovely spot as last year).

Saturday, June 28:

LWVSB Annual Meeting 2008 at the Holiday Inn in Goleta.

If you know someone who might be interested in the League, please pass along this application:

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, SANTA BARBARA

- Here's my annual membership dues of \$60*
- Second member in same household \$30
- Student \$30
- Please send me more information about League
- I can't join right now; here is my contribution of \$_____ to support the League.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Discounted dues are available for special circumstances. Contact Joanie Jones - 683-1937.*

CALENDAR - MARCH 2008

Discussion Units: Closing the Achievement Gap in Education

- 2 **Sunday** **Health Care for All:** 3:00 p.m. Girls, Inc. 5315 Foothill Rd., Carpinteria. Contact Dorothy Campbell.
- 4 **Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush, 879-5537.
- 5 **Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 5 **Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk, 5044 Walnut Park Dr.
- 7 **Friday** **South Central Coast Environmental Task Force:** 9:45 a.m. League office, 328 E. Carrillo St., Suite A. Meet with representatives from tri-counties Leagues to discuss coastal issues (see p. 3)
- 12 **Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2:00 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.
- 14 **Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10:00 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 17 **Monday** ***Channel Voter deadline.***
- 19 **Wednesday** **Community Forum:** "The California Voters First Redistricting Initiative" 12:15-2 p.m. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Brown bag lunch. Drinks and cookies provided.

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL

Discussion Units: Local Program Planning

- 1 **Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush, 879-5537.
- 2 **Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2:00 at the Carpinteria Woman's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Brown bag lunch. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 2 **Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Sheila Kamhi, 1040 Portesuello Ave.
- 9 **Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2:00 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SANTA BARBARA, INC.
328 A East Carrillo Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101**

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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. If you would like to join the local League, call the League office at 965-2422.

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