



The Voter

Annual Meeting on June 18th Join Us!

Join us at Bud's!



Our Annual Meeting is not only a time to plan for the future—we elect officers and adopt a budget for the coming year—but it is also a time of camaraderie. Most of our meetings are focused on issues, usually serious ones—like the State budget crisis. But at the Annual Meeting we can also take some time to visit with fellow League members.

When
Thursday
June 18th, 6:00 p.m.

Where
Bud's Restaurant
314 Lincoln Center
Stockton

Cost
\$35

Once again we'll meet at Bud's. The dinner will be a combination of Bud's Beef and chicken—the popular menu we've enjoyed in the past.

The Annual Meeting Kit will be coming to a mailbox near you soon! Bring it with you to our meeting on the 18th. See you there!

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Community Interested in Budget Impact on Local Services



Several community members joined League members for a discussion of the impact that the State's budget crisis is having on the provision of local services. While a few services will hold their own, many vital services will be reduced, some drastically, by the weak economy and budget decisions made or proposed. Six panelists representing San Joaquin County service areas spoke about curtailed direct services to area residents.



Bill Mitchell, SJ County Public Health Director told the audience that Health Services received a 10% across the board budget reduction with some programs eliminated rather than reduced, for instance, a program that addressed teen pregnancy by talking with potential young fathers. Speaking specifically about Public Health, Mitchell said that 80-90% of the health conditions that they monitor are mandated by the State—but funded by the County's General Fund. "Public Health is a social justice

issue," Mitchell declared, because a variety of societal issues affect people's health.

Mick Founds, Deputy Superintendent at the County Office of Education, outlined the impact of poverty and diversity on education in SJ County:



- 58% of the county's students are in school meal programs as compared to 37% statewide
- 20% of students are English language learners, compared

How to contact the League:

LWVSJC
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204
209-465-0293
Email: LWVSJC@gmail.com
www.sjc.lca.wvnet.org

President's Message—PEACHES EHRICH

Our League year is winding down after a busy April. I want to thank those League members who helped me staff the League table at Earth Day: Esther Vasquez and Colleen Foster. And thanks go to Bea Lingenfelter for coordinating our volunteer efforts at the Asparagus Festival and to those League members who took shifts at the ID booth to help us in our major fundraising effort of the year: Jane Wagner-Tyack, Daphne Shaw, Cate White, Ann Pentecost, Esther Vasquez, Colleen Foster, Bev Blum, Dee Matteucci, and Bea herself. Thanks, too, to UOP volunteers Liz Musquiez and Ruthie Casteneda.

I'd also like to thank the members of the LWVSJC Board for their support and assistance during the past year. They have, in effect, served as 'co-President' - planning programs, visiting legislators, registering voters at Earth Day and responding to inquiries from other community groups—in addition to covering all the voter services activities involved in the General Election last fall and the special election this May. Take a bow, ladies!

I hope all of you will come to our Annual Meeting on June 18th. With your help, we can begin to plan a strong program for next year.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Board Recommends Household Dues Increase

Last year the Board recommended a dues increase of \$10 in order for our League to keep ahead of dues increases by the State and National Leagues. With Per Member Payment increases by LWVC and LWVUS, our League had to raise dues or have just \$1.00 per member per year to operate locally.

The membership voted in the dues increase at the June 2008 Annual Meeting. However, only individual dues were raised. In order to treat all members fairly, the Board is recommending that the household dues be raised by \$10 this year. If passed by the membership, household dues will go from \$75 to \$85. That is still a substantial savings from the \$120 for two individual memberships and it will equalize the financial responsibility among all League members.

This proposal will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on June 18th.

Salaries of Elected Officials

League member Dale Stocking asked the LWVSJC Board to take a position sup-

porting a proposal he plans to make that would change the current method of setting the salary for the Mayor of Stockton. A few years ago, the Mayor's salary was tied to that of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. Dale would like to see more flexibility, especially in times of financial distress.

The Board considered Dale's request then determined that the League does not have a position on which to base any action, following the State League's decision that neither LWVC nor LWVUS had a relevant decision that would allow LWVC to take a stand on Proposition 1F (exceptions to State elected officials salary increases) on the May 19th ballot.

Member Survey Planned

Early in the coming fiscal year, local League members will be surveyed about LWVSJC—what would entice members to become more involved, the place of the Voter in League communications and other issues that will help the Board plan for an effective year.

LWVSJC Board of Directors for 2008-2009

Officers

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Nominating Committee

Dee Matteucci, Chair; Tandy Gotschall, Sally Miller and two Board members to be appointed. Bea Lingenfelter and Colleen Foster have been selected to complete the Committee.

Helen Pearson Award Committee

Vickie Markarian, Chair; Sylvia Kothe and Cate White

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE

SPECIAL ELECTION MAY 19TH— VOTE!

The Governor and the Legislature agreed on a budget package to balance the budget for FY2008-2009 and 2009-2010. BUT—and this is a big BUT—the voters must agree in order for the budget process to be completed. LWVC has reviewed the budget proposals and has found the propositions wanting.



“We oppose these measures because they are NOT the solution to our long term financial crisis, with the continuing structural deficit in the state budget and flawed budget process,” said Janis R. Hirohama, president of the League. “We make this decision with regret. We would support real reform to make the state budget process more accountable and give the Legislature and Governor effective tools to advance state priorities. However, these hurriedly drafted propositions, produced at the end of a flawed process that kept both the public and most legislators in the dark, will only make our fiscal situation worse.”

PROPOSITION 1A is touted by its proponents as the way to bring stability to the budget process. But what it will *really* do is tie the hands of the Legislature and Governor as they face changing needs for state and local government services. It will keep them from taking into account the State’s changing demographics and growth in the actual cost of important services like health care.

“Although some claim there is an urgency to pass Prop. 1A to resolve our state’s budget problems, we disagree,” said Hirohama. “Most of its provisions will not take effect for two years—two years that we should spend hammering out *real* solutions to our budget and fiscal challenges.”

The League believes elected officials should be allowed to carry out their responsibilities with flexibility. Years of “ballot-box budgeting” and formulas for auto-pilot spending have greatly eroded that flexibility. Prop. 1A, however, adds to the prob-

lem. For example, it dictates how half the funds that must be transferred to the “Budget Stabilization Fund” are to be used; it removes the Governor’s ability to suspend transfers to the fund in difficult years; and it imposes new formulas for calculating “unanticipated revenues” and specifies how they can be used in good years. And, after the deep cuts made during these strapped times, it could lock in a reduced level of services by failing to properly take account of increased caseloads and program costs.

If Prop. 1A passes, the Governor would be given new power to make mid-year cuts and suspend COLAs in state programs without legislative oversight. The League believes that midyear budget adjustments should require joint action of the legislative and executive branches so that checks and balances are maintained.

PROPOSITION 1C This proposal attempts to raise money for the short term by selling bonds that would be paid off by future lottery revenue. In light of California’s poor credit rating and the state of the economy, those bonds would have to be sold at very unfavorable interest rates, if they can be sold at all. The Legislative Analyst says that in the long term, lottery profits probably would not be enough to cover the higher payments to education required by Prop. 1C. We criticized this proposal as irresponsible last fall, and if anything, that criticism applies more than ever now.

PROPOSITIONS 1D AND 1E On May 19, voters will also be asked to approve the temporary taking of funds from early childhood and mental health programs that were established by two previous initiatives. These are illusory, stopgap measures and the League opposes these propositions as part of this

objectionable package. It is ironic that these initiatives, which did what many consider “the right thing” by providing a source of funding, now face reductions.

The League is neutral on **PROPOSITION 1B**. State responsibility for the funding of public education is essential, and we appreciate the need to pay back the devastating cuts that our schools and community colleges have sustained. On the other hand, the Legislature will have the ability to restore school funding without Prop. 1B and it is not needed in this package of propositions.

Since the League has no position on setting salaries for public officials, we take no position on **PROPOSITION 1F**, which would prevent pay raises for legislators and statewide constitutional officers during budget deficit years.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that California is facing the worst budget crisis in its history, with the worldwide recession severely affecting state revenues and the need for state services. Moreover, our budget system is broken and in desperate need of reform. This year illustrates the need to abandon the two-thirds vote requirement for passing budgets and raising revenues, and we must also look at other budget reforms. In the meantime, a new tax commission is considering ways to broaden or stabilize our revenues. “There is much that needs to be done,” Hirohama stated, “but we are certain that the propositions on the May 19 ballot are not the answer.”



Green in the NEWS

This paper was originally written as an op-ed in the *Bangor Daily News* (ME) as a way to help rural Maine citizens reduce their energy costs. It was then reprinted in the League of Women Voters of Maine newsletter. The LWVUS Climate Change Task Force hopes that local Leagues can use this paper for public education



Excerpts from the paper are reprinted here. Some ideas are new and many are not—but a reminder never hurts.

Things You Can Do For Free (Or Almost Free)

By Pamela W. Person

Some money-saving, NO cost or very low cost ways to cut your use of gasoline fuel

1. Combine your trips
2. Carpool
3. Find out the proper number of pounds for your tires and make sure they are inflated to that pressure. Check once every month. Under-inflated tires can cause you to lose 1-2 miles per gallon
4. Don't be an aggressive driver. The faster you drive, the more gasoline you waste.
5. Observe the speed limit
6. Avoid unnecessary idling.
7. Have your air filter inspected every time you change your oil. If it is dirty, replace it, as a dirty air filter can cause you to lose 10 percent of your gas mileage
8. Have your gas cap inspected
9. Have your spark plugs inspected and replaced if dirty.
10. Keep your engine tuned.
11. Reduce excess weight in vehicles. For every extra 100 pounds you can remove from your vehicle you can increase gas mileage by 20 percent

SOME money- saving, NO cost or low cost ways to reduce your electric bill:

1. Turn off your lights when you leave a room.
2. Turn off your computer when you will not be using it for more than four hours or overnight.
3. Dry your clothes on a line in warm weather
4. Turn your hot water heater down to 120 degrees (no lower). If your water heater was made before 2000, wrap it in water heater wrap to conserve heat.
5. When a light bulb burns out, replace it with a compact fluorescent (CFL) one.
6. Turn down the heat at night and when not at home so the furnace's electric motor will not run as much.
7. Turn down the heat at night and when not at home so the furnace's electric motor will not run as much.
8. If you have an air conditioner, try to have it run as little as possible so your bill will be lower.
9. During hot spells, try using fans instead of, or in addition to, an air conditioner. Wear cool clothes and drink plenty of water.
10. When using your air conditioner, set it to over 82 degrees if you are going to be away for more than 7 hours. When you are at home, have the air conditioner set to cool no lower than necessary. Wear cool clothes.
11. Most nights in most areas, turn off the air conditioner and open the windows for cool, fresh air.
12. Change your air conditioner's filter yearly.
13. On hot and humid days, keep your curtains, shades or blinds closed, as windows are a heat gain area.
14. Wash your clothes only when you have a full load.
15. Wash your dishes in the dishwasher only when you have a full load as 60 to 80 percent of the

power used by the dishwasher is for heating the water.

16. Make more than one meal at a time, e.g., soups, stews, casseroles, spaghetti sauce. Freeze the other portions in separate containers for future meals. This saves time and effort as well as adds variety to your menus.
17. Dry your hair in the air rather than with a dryer.

Big Problems call for Small Solutions

Or so says Jodi Helmer, author of *The Green Year: 365 small things you can do to make a big difference*. A few thoughts from her book:



Celebrate Earth Day by planting a tree.

- Park your car in the shade. (Gas evaporates more quickly when you park in the sun.)
- Take your own mug to the coffee shop.
- Buy phosphate free laundry detergent.
- Use electronic invitations instead of paper ones.
- Get the junk out of your trunk! (Weight reduces fuel mileage.)
- Try the 100-mile diet. On average, the ingredients you use for a meal travel 1,000 miles before they reach your plate. Try eating foods that are grown within 100 of your home. (Here in the Central Valley, we should be able to do this! Learn more at www.100milediet.com)
- Switch to a manual can opener. Although it takes litter energy to operate, it takes a lot of resources to manufacture & ship—and takes up more space in the landfill.

Local Cuts Significant

(Continued from page 1)

- with 2% in California
- 11% are special needs students
- We are dead last in adult-student ratio
- The nation has 92% more counselors than we have in SJ County

California is 46th in the nation in education funding. “We have less for education because of Proposition 13” Founts said, so schools need to be more creative. To achieve this, he advocated more local—and less State— control of schools and their programs.



Dana Cowell, Deputy Director of the San Joaquin Council of Governments, had perhaps the most encouraging news. Although revenue is down 10%, the transportation programs under COG are ‘relatively unaffected’ due to long term planning, dedicated funding (Measure K) and the positive impact of anticipated stimulus funds.

Lani Schiff-Ross, Executive Director of the First Five programs funded by the Prop 10 tobacco tax, said their programs are much more precarious, particularly in light of the proposal to ‘borrow’ First Five money statewide to balance the State’s budget (Proposition D). First Five is charged with providing school readiness and health access programs that are over and above what the State provides. If Proposition 1D passes, our local First Five program will lost \$4M, losing 940 preschools spaces and affecting home visitation and literacy programs.



Reuben Orozco, Assistant Sheriff, said the Sheriff’s Office was able to manage the \$1.1M mid-year cuts to their budget but would have a more difficult time weathering the anticipated \$6.1M

budget decrease in the next fiscal year. Administrative and supervisory staff are involved in targeting cuts that will preserve staffing levels of both sworn and support staff.

Sheriff Steve Moore joined the program after participating in the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event. He added that they are anticipating funding from the federal stimulus package and other grants. He also said that he is trying to maintain the strength of the department by doing more recruitment of local residents. “It takes longer to get them trained,” he said, “but they don’t go back home to Marin or southern California after they’ve completed the basic program either.” Moore answered an audience question by saying that “the jail is still on track.”



Wendy Moore, Deputy Director of the County’s Human Services Dept., painted a bleaker picture. Social work caseloads are at levels that mean workers see clients in their homes *once a year*. Programs that help give respite to caregivers to alleviate or forestall burnout have been eliminated. The Ombudsman program for nursing facilities is at half strength. Child Protective Services, where the ideal caseload is 12 for each social worker, is not at 30-1. Podiatry and dental services—considered ‘special’ and therefore optional— have been eliminated, though lack of dental health can lead to infection and lack of proper foot care for diabetics can lead to gangrene.

Thanks to Boardmember Cate White for championing and organizing this informative, if rather bleak, program.



Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project



The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) Public Advocacy for Voter Protection

Project has been created to help to bolster its capacity for continuing and expanding its critical state-based advocacy to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations.

In 2002, in the wake of the tumultuous 2000 election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (“HAVA”) to modernize the nation’s election processes and to help ensure that eligible voters are no longer deprived of the franchise due to administrative errors.

Unfortunately, in many states, politicians have seized on this opportunity as a means of disenfranchising targeted voters through changes in election laws. These new measures have the potential of disenfranchising more Americans than any Election Day problems we have seen in the past.

In an effort to fight back, the League of Women Voters is focusing on five specific issues:

1. Oppose ID and documentary proof of citizenship
2. Improve administration of state-wide database systems
3. Guard against undue restrictions on voter registration
4. Improve polling place management
5. Improve poll worker training and strengthening poll workers



Focus on LWVUS & LWVC

Reform Groups Strongly Praise President Obama's Government Integrity Reform Measures during First Hundred Days

LWVUS Joins in Statement

The League of Women Voters joined with Common Cause, Democracy 21, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG in a statement supporting President Obama's actions to "strengthen ethics, lobbying and transparency rules for the Executive Branch." The statement praised President Obama's initial actions "to challenge the way business is done in Washington and the special interest, lobbying culture that influences government decisions at the expense of the American people." The groups added that "the toughest fight to change the way Washington works still lies ahead – the need to address the role of influence money in Washington by repairing the existing presidential public financing system and creating a new congressional public financing system. Nevertheless, we believe the President has demonstrated in his first hundred days through words and deeds that he is serious about changing the rules of the game in Washington and increasing the voice of citizens in the governing process."

The statement praised the Ethics Executive Order issued by the President at the outset of his Administration for its "precedent-setting revolving door provisions... designed to prevent potential conflicts of interest for incoming government officials involving their former employers or clients and to prevent improper trading on government service for personal gain by outgoing government officials."

The Statement continues: "The Executive Order contains the first-ever "reverse revolving door" provisions for incoming presidential appointees, which are designed to prevent new appointees from importing the interests of

their former employers and clients when they enter government and to help assure citizens that the public interest will come first. The Executive Order requires all appointees to recuse themselves from matters that significantly affect the interests of anyone who was a former employer or client of the incoming official within the two years prior to joining the Administration.

The revolving door provisions also prohibit departed presidential appointees from coming back to lobby any senior executive branch official in the Administration for the full length of the Obama presidency. These are the toughest revolving door provisions ever established. The Executive Order further prohibits all presidential appointees from accepting any gifts from lobbyists or lobbying organizations, other than token gifts.

Under the Executive Order, all presidential appointees are required to sign a binding "ethics pledge" to abide by the revolving door restrictions, recusal arrangements and gift ban.

The Obama Administration also has taken unprecedented transparency steps during its first 100 days. In a pilot project adopted for the economic stimulus package, the Administration for the first time requires **registered lobbyists** working to influence Executive Branch decisions to submit their lobbying requests in writing, information that is then posted on the Internet and made available to the public.

The pilot project for the stimulus package opens the door to establishing a government-wide policy for public disclosure of all lobbying contacts by registered lobbyists with Executive Branch officials. This would greatly expand existing lobbying disclosure requirements.

The Administration also has made an

important change regarding the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** by ordering agencies and departments to adopt a presumption of disclosure for information requested under FOIA. This should make it far easier for citizens and the media to obtain information under FOIA.

In a reversal of an Executive Order adopted by President Bush, the Administration also restored the practice of having only a sitting President, and not past Presidents, able to restrict citizen and media access to presidential records by claiming executive privilege over these records.

President Obama also ordered a group of federal agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget, to develop recommendations for a new Open Government Directive to be issued by the President.

All of these steps add up to unprecedented action taken by President Obama on groundbreaking government integrity measures that begin to rebalance the interests in Washington of the American people with the influence in Washington of special interests."



LWVC Convention Long Beach, May 15-17, 2009 Speakers

- Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk Dean Logan
- John Cruz, Appointments Secretary to Governor Schwarzenegger
- State Senator Jenny Oropeza
- Secretary of State Debra Bowen will also visit the Convention



LEAGUE NEWS

Painless Fundraising at the Annual Meeting

We've all heard that a penny saved is a penny earned. **Well, we'd like League members to save your pennies** — and nickels and dimes and quarters and Susan B. Anthony dollars.



Save coins for a month—and bring a check for what you've saved to the Annual Meeting.

This is an easy fundraiser. No expensive event to attend. No need to get dressed up. No raffle prizes you really don't want. Just put your spare change in a separate place each day from now until June 18th, count it and bring us a check.

We did this last year and it was fun, profitable for the League—and pretty painless for the donors.

Give reign to your creative self! or Seeking Voter Editor

It's not exactly like writing the Great American Novel—but anyone who enjoys writing and editing has an opportunity come July. The Board is seeking an editor for the Voter, our League newsletter. While the responsibility involves reporting and informing, the Voter editor does get to use his or her creative talents in getting out our monthly—or, in the future, probably quarterly—communiqué. The format is at the discretion of the editor and it can be a fun way to learn 'publishing' skills.

The Voter editor is always 'in the know' - and you can highlight League issues that coincide with your own interests, as with the new column started this year, *Green in the News*.

Interested? Let incoming president Jane Wagner-Tyack know. You can contact Colleen Foster for more information on the job, too.

Share your Health Care Stories

LWVSJC is looking for personal stories about health care experiences that bring home the necessity for reform of our health care system.

The recent experience of Ursula Meyer who fell, spent a surprising amount of time waiting for an ambu-



lance and over 10 hours in the emergency room stimulated others to share their stories of less than stellar health care stories.

Since LWV has made reforming the health care system a priority at both the state and national levels, The Board had the idea of compiling our stories and giving them to our state and federal representatives as a way of lobbying for change.

So, we are soliciting your stories. Please send them to Cate White at blkbrd98@aol.com before the Annual Meeting. Thank you!

ANNUAL MEETING RESERVATION

_____ **Yes, I will be at the Annual Meeting.**

_____ **I will bring _____ guests. Enclosed is a check for _____ to cover _____ person(s).**

To make a reservation, contact Vickie Markarian at 823-1486 or email her at hyeorty@comcast.net.

You may pay at the door but you MUST make reservations in advance. Thank you.

**Or You can mail in this form with your check made out to LWVSJC to
LWVSJC
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204**



League of Women Voters
of San Joaquin County
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204

www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

LWVC Convention: May 15-17, 2009: *Catch the Wave to the Future.* Long Beach.



May 19, 2009: ELECTION DAY ————— **Be sure to Vote!**

Annual Meeting, Thursday, June 18th, 6:00 p.m. Bud's Seafood Restaurant, 314 Lincoln Center, Stockton
Please make your reservation now (details on page 7). Participate in our 'painless fundraiser' (see page 7)
Bring your Annual Meeting Kit to the Meeting.
(It will be mailed separately by May 18th.)

Board Meetings

All League members are welcome to attend Board meetings. Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at Hospice, 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton . Meetings start at 5:30 p.m.

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.