



# The Voter

LWVSJC  
Board of Directors for  
2009-2010

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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.*

## January League Program on County Prison Facilities Well-Attended

by Daphne Shaw

On January 30, 2010, the San Joaquin County League of Women Voters sponsored “New State Prison Facilities: Background and Prospects.” The program was held at Valley Brewing Co. and included a no-host breakfast prior to the program. Approximately 80 people attended. The intent of the program was to give the public a chance to hear about issues surrounding the placement of two prison hospitals/mental health facilities in San Joaquin County as well as the Re-entry Facility to be sited at the former California Women’s Prison. The public was able to directly from local people as well as those from Sacramento.



J. Clark Kelso and Mike Machado

Photo by Denny Ah Tye

City of Stockton Mayor Ann Johnson led the discussion for the local perspective and emphasized that there should be “local hires, local procurement and local training.” San Joaquin County

Supervisor Steve Bestolarides expressed the concern that the facilities will pull health care workers from their current employment with the county and private hospitals, leaving fewer healthcare professionals to serve the community. He also stated County concerns that the facilities would impact the Coroner’s caseload as well as pull custodial staff from the County Jail. The local presenters closed with Doug Wilhoit, CEO, Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce, who talked about the history and process that has occurred in recent months, culminating with a lawsuit filed by the Chamber, the City of Stockton and the County of San Joaquin, against the Receiver and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The suit is an effort to gain mitigation for what local officials believe will be negative impacts of the facilities in the area.

Former State Senator Mike Machado led off for the Sacramento perspective speaking about his experience and efforts while in the Legislature to deal with some of the ongoing prison issues. He was followed by J. Clark Kelso, the Federal Receiver, who told of the various court cases regarding health care in the prison system that led to the decision by the federal court to name a Health Care Receiver, tasked to reform the California State Prison health care system. Brett Morgan, Chief of Staff, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, presented data to address some of the concerns held by the community regarding families of inmates moving to the area, the increase in coroner’s case load, and efforts by the CDCR to recruit health care professionals and correctional staff to move to San Joaquin County. Speakers also addressed other concerns voiced by the audience following the end of the presentations.

The forum was structured by the League Board, and Board members assisted in registering guests, passing out question cards and vetting the questions to be asked of the presenters. The program was moderated by League member Donna Brown.

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## **President’s Message**

### **A Few Notes About Water Issues**

LWVSJC is a co-sponsor of two water forums this spring organized by the UOP School of International Studies Inter-American Program, Hispanics for Political Action (HPA) and the Coalition of Mexican American Associations (COMA). The first, held at UOP on March 6, looked at water and jobs, recent water legislation, and planning for conveyance (a peripheral canal). The second, scheduled for April 3, will look more closely at water and agricultural issues.

We also co-sponsored a water forum in Antioch in January (see the report below). Meanwhile, I am working with LWVC on launching web-based educational and informational material about water on the State League website. LWVC wants to provide background to help voters understand the water bond that will be on the November 2010 ballot. If you are concerned about water issues and would like to help, please get in touch with me at [JaneTyack@mac.com](mailto:JaneTyack@mac.com)

Jane

## Antioch Forum Provides Overview of Bay-Delta Water Issues

*By Mary Lois Thompson and Sally Miller*

On January 23, a few of us drove in two cars to Antioch to represent our SJC League at a jointly sponsored event with the Diablo Valley League of Women Voters. It was a very full and well-attended three-hour morning program beautifully managed by the Antioch group and moderated by LWVSCJ President Jane Wagner-Tyack.

The panel of speakers included Dr. Gregory Gartrell of the Contra Costa Water District. He explained that pending legislative bills do not “fix” the Delta but provide a framework for improvements. They deal with the water supply, and place the Delta eco-system on a more equal footing with urban and agricultural needs. He spoke of the need to move from a two-hundred year old era of Extraction of our resources to an era of Sustainability. Examples that he gave include: the shutting off of pumps in spring, a moratorium on the granting of additional water rights, and the funding of levee repairs, monies for which has been made available. He also emphasized the need to monitor ground water use, California being the only western state which does not do so. The increasing salinity of Delta water needs to be addressed, as does the poor condition of Delta fisheries.

### **Problems with the State Water Board**

The next panelist was Dr. Lawrence Kolb, a former Water Quality Control Board Director. He declared flatly that the State Water Resources Control Board is a failed agency that has allocated too much to water export interests at the expense of the Delta. Only 2 % of the state’s economy is related to agriculture, but it uses forty percent of our water. Low value, high irrigation crops include rice, alfalfa, and cotton. Alfalfa and also pastures sustain a dairy industry that is larger than California needs. A move to so-called dry farming would mean that a peripheral canal or other conveyance would not be needed.

According to Kolb, the West Side of the San Joaquin Valley (I-5 corridor) has soil which contains selenium. When irrigated, it becomes toxic, which has led to deformed birds and aquatic life. 600,000 acres there are farmed, and should be bought out, and such a buyout would be cheaper than constructing a canal.

Susanna Schlendorf spoke on behalf of Assemblywoman Buchanan of the 15<sup>th</sup> district. She spoke of decades of failed water legislation and agencies. Five Delta counties have been excluded from state water planning boards; for example, State Senator Lois Wolk who is a longtime water specialist in the various elected positions she has held, failed in her attempt to secure Delta inclusion in governance. The Governor’s current bill is full of loopholes, and his Stewardship Council appointees favor a canal. In any event, that Council is only funded annually, which works against continuity in policy. The Council does favor Delta planning so that all issues can be considered, such as rising sea levels, levee disrepair, housing and agriculture, aquatic life, and pollution.

The next speaker was Kari Fisher, a counsel for the Farm Bureau. She noted that one of every six jobs in California is connected to agriculture, with Fresno County the agricultural capital of the state. Agriculture uses 40 percent of state water, she maintained, as opposed to a 80 % figure

*Antioch Forum, cont.*

cited earlier. Irrigation and storage system use old technology that need to be modernized and upgraded. Crop production has increased without equal water increases, indicating that farmers are using water wisely.

Contra Costa Supervisor Mary Piepho was the next panelist. She emphasized that Delta levees are aging, and that climate change is a complicating factor. She argued that the Governor is not saving California from a water crisis but exacerbating it. No definitive study has been done of Delta water and land needs. The five Delta counties formed a coalition in 2008 to influence Delta issues, but the coalition has been ignored by Sacramento and shut out of the decision-making process. Her final comment was, “Don’t do anything about us without us.”



**Conveyance**

The following speaker was Karla Nemeth of the Resource Agency, liaison to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. She said that the Plan has two goals: to see to California’s water needs and to protect the Delta. Canal and pumping systems are both extremely hard on aquatic species. Fish are pulled into pumps and destroyed, or caught in certain areas and trucked elsewhere, with predator fish waiting at trucking centers. Habitat restoration plans include: more flood plain habitat, restoration of tidal marsh (65,000 acres), and riparian restoration (5,000 acres). We seem now to be unable to take quality care of the Delta. The BDCP will have a public draft plan by fall, 2010.

The final panelist was David Nesmith of the Environmental Water Caucus and Bay Area Sierra Club. The Caucus reports that the best dam sites already exist. The best conservation methods involve groundwater management, which is not done now, urban efficiency in use of water, and recycling. Our watershed goes from the Oregon border through the Central Valley. The State sends water north of Sacramento for rice, and water south for cotton and the Westlands orchards. We should not be growing thirsty crops. He finished by saying “The bill is coming due on our one hundred year policy of extraction instead of sustainability of water resources. We must represent our natural resources.”

This panel was worthwhile, and it was even exhilarating to hear of the commitments toward turning our water policy in a more appropriate direction.

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## LWVC Positions on Propositions on the June 2010 Ballot

At its January meeting, the LWVC board of directors took the following positions on the measures that will appear on the June 8, 2010 ballot. As always, local Leagues may not take action on state measures on which the LWVC has not taken a stand, nor may they act contrary to any LWVC stand.

**Proposition 13: Property Tax: New Construction Exclusion: Seismic Retrofitting.** Although the LWVC generally supports regular, frequent reappraisals for property tax purposes, and this measure excludes certain construction from reappraisal, a case can be made for the public safety benefit of encouraging seismic retrofits. **Neutral**

**Proposition 14: Elections: Open Primaries (Top-Two Candidate Open Primary Act).** The LWVC has never studied political parties, nor how they select their candidates, and has no position on this subject. **No Position**

**Proposition 15: Political Reform Act of 1974: California Fair Elections Act of 2008.** The LWVC has long been a supporter of public financing and is co-chair of the campaign to pass Prop. 15. **Support (see below)**

**Proposition 16: New Two-Thirds Vote Requirement for Local Public Electricity Providers.** LWVC positions call for a simple majority vote on revenue and finance measures at both the state and local levels. **Oppose**

**Proposition 17: Allows Auto Insurance Companies to Base Their Prices in Part on a Driver’s History of Insurance Coverage.** The LWVC has not studied, and therefore has no position on, insurance issues. **No Position**

[League action materials](#) will include the flier, The League of Women Voters Recommends (available as a [web page](#) and as a [PDF](#)), and the Action Guide, which will be available online by early April. The Secretary of State will post the Voter Information Guide material on the propositions for public examination between February 23 and March 15.

The LWVC has not yet taken a position on any statewide initiative that may appear on the November 2010 ballot.

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## Get ready for a long ballot in June

This June, California voters will select party nominees for the statewide offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Controller, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, and members of the State Board of Equalization. Also, we will select party nominees for one U.S. Senator, all 53 U.S. Representatives from California, 20 State Senators (from even-numbered districts), and all 80 State Assembly members. There will also be nonpartisan elections for the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, county officials, and Superior Court judges, plus local races in some communities.

*June ballot, cont.*

In this primary election, voters registered with a political party will get a ballot with just their party’s candidates. Decline-to-state voters will get a ballot with candidates only for the nonpartisan offices, unless they ask for a Democratic or Republican ballot. In order to vote, voters must be registered by May 24, 2010. Remember to re-register if you have moved, changed your name or wish to change political party affiliation. [Contact your county registrar for more information.](#)

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## Two Local League Programs Scheduled for May

**ON MONDAY, MAY 3,** LWVSJC is hosting a public forum in the south county, ***“Proposition 16 and Its Implications for Electric Service in South San Joaquin County.”*** Jeff Shields, General Manager of the South San Joaquin Irrigation District, will discuss the district’s plans to provide electric service within the district boundaries. This would include Manteca, Ripon, and Escalon. Currently, the district operates several hydroelectric dams and has recently built a solar power grid that is the primary power source for their water treatment plant in Oakdale. They claim that they could save rate payers in the area up 15% on their electric bills.

Cate White, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Advocacy Chair, will explain Proposition 16 on the June ballot and its implications for the irrigation district’s proposal. Prop. 16 would require any transfer of the electric transmission function from PG&E to another agency to be approved by a 2/3 vote of those affected. LWVC has taken a position against Prop. 16.

The program will be held from 7 to 8:30 in the McFall Room of the Manteca Public Library.

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**ON SATURDAY, MAY 22,** we will have our previously scheduled program on ***“Government Reform Proposals for the 2010 Ballots.”*** The League of Women Voters of California, the California Clean Money Action Fund, California Common Cause, and the California Nurses Association are co-chairing the campaign to pass the California Fair Elections Act on the June 8, 2010 ballot. Authored by Senator Loni Hancock and signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the ballot measure would establish a voluntary pilot public financing program for the 2014 and 2018 Secretary of State races. If passed, the California Fair Elections Act would impose strict reporting requirements and prohibitions on campaign spending for participating candidates. Participating candidates would be banned from raising or spending money beyond the limited public financing. Violators would face fines, possible jail time, and prohibitions from running for office in the future.

At our May program, LWVC Board member Helen Hutchison will speak to us on this measure and other reforms being proposed for this year’s elections. The program will begin at 9:30 at Valley Brewing Co., 157 W. Adams St. in Stockton.

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## A Few Reminders About the Census

The Census, taken every ten years, is used to apportion the number of members of the United States House of Representatives among the states. Census statistics are also used in to apportion federal funding for many social and economic programs. We all need to participate in the census, but we also need to be aware of scams associated with it.

Census workers will have badges, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see the identification and badge before answering their questions. They will not ask for your Social Security number, credit card, or banking information. You do not have to invite them into your home, and you do not have to give them any information except for how many people live at your address.

The Census Bureau will not be contacting you by email. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an email that claim to be from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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## The Latest News on SB 810, California’s Single Payer Plan

*by Cate White, LWVSJC Advocacy Chair*

Although the national health insurance bill recently passed provides some important new safeguards and will make insurance more accessible to everyone, the changes it brings are still a long way from solving our health insurance problems. That is why the League of Women Voters of California continues to support SB 810, California’s single payer health care bill. They have posted the following statement on their website:

Support SB 810, California’s Single Payer health care bill by following the 365 Ad Campaign. A new 30 second spot will emphasize a different aspect of single payer universal health care every day for a full year. The League is a partner with CaliforniaOneCare to support SB 810.

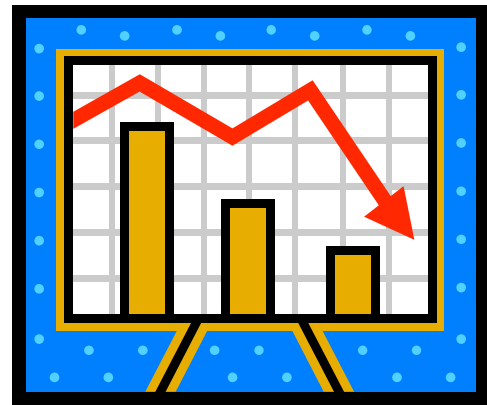
CaliforniaOneCare is a coalition of groups working for single payer health care in California. Learn more by going online to [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org) and looking for the CaliforniaOneCare ad campaign. You can also view the ads directly and sign a petition on favor of SB 810 by going to [www.californiaonecare.org](http://www.californiaonecare.org) The League encourages individuals to write their legislators in support of SB 810. The bill was passed out of the state Senate in February, with state Senator Lois Wolk voting in favor. Currently, SB 810 is before the state Assembly, where a vote is expected sometime before August. Urge your state Assembly member to support SB 810!

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## SJC League Board Adopts Statement on School Budget Cuts

*At its March meeting, the LWVSJC board of directors adopted to following position Statement on School Budget Cuts, written by 1st Vice President Cate White.*

The League of Women Voters on San Joaquin County has been deeply troubled by the current budget situation of our local school districts. In order to accommodate shrinking funds, one of our largest districts (Stockton Unified) sent out 230 layoff notices this month. Stockton Unified has also voted to end bus transportation for magnet school students. Other districts have also limited bus service and are contemplating layoffs as well as cutting programs, such as Science Camp, and increasing class sizes. Several rural schools in various districts have either been closed or are scheduled to be closed, disproportionately impacting low income and minority students. Some districts are proposing to shorten the school year. In spite of ever skyrocketing fees, Delta College, our local community college, has cut 86 positions since June 2009. They have also severely cut services for disabled and economically disadvantaged students. Over 800 classes have been closed or eliminated from this year's schedule, leading to class crowding and long waiting lists (2,000 and up). These developments have grave consequences for our community for many years to come. Clearly, the League's stated positions for K-12 "education funding that is adequate, flexible, equitable, reliable and sustainable" and Community College resources that are "stable, accommodate all enrolling students---and provide opportunities for long-range planning", are not being met.



Our League believes that just as with last year's state budget, cuts alone are not the answer. We must find new revenues as well. With that in mind, we would support a ballot initiative that reduces the 2/3 majority needed to pass the budget (and it's funding) to a simple majority. The proposed initiative titled "Local Control of Classrooms Act" to lower the majority needed to pass school district parcel taxes from 2/3 to 55% also deserves support. As for higher education, we feel that AB 656 (Torricono), which would institute an oil severance tax to be used to fund higher education, would help to stabilize funding. Lastly, we see a link between the effort to pass Single Payer health care and our over-extended school budgets. The reduced costs that could be realized through this reform (adding up to millions of dollars for larger districts) could be used to great advantage by our school systems.



## Mark Your Calendars Now for the Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 17 at Alder Market, 151 West Alder Street in Stockton. No-host bar begins at 5:30, dinner will be served at 6:30, and the program will begin at 7:30. There will be beef, fish, chicken, and vegetarian options. The cost is \$35.

More information will follow regarding reservations.

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## Announcements

Katrina Jaggears received a Women of Distinction Award at UOP on March 30.  
**Congratulations, Katrina!**

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In March, the LWVSJC board of directors voted to discontinue the League's telephone number and answering service. We realized, to our surprise, that very few people were trying to reach us by phone regarding League business. The vast majority of the calls received were solicitations, so the expense (close to \$500 a year) seemed unjustified. Non-members who contact us typically do so via email or our website. And of course members can always reach individuals by phone using the numbers in the Membership Directory.

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### *Circle of Support*

*The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County expresses its thanks to the following individual for her generous donation to enable us to go forward with our work.*

*Leslie Oliver*



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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 8 – Board Meeting

Saturday, April 18 – Earth Day Celebration, Victory Park, Stockton

Friday, April 23 – Sunday, April 25 – Asparagus Festival (volunteers still welcome; contact Bea Lingenfelter, beaal@comcast.net)

Thursday, May 13 – Board Meeting

Monday, May 3 – “Proposition 16 and Its Implications for Electric Service in South San Joaquin County,” Manteca Library, 7 – 8:30 p.m. (see inside for details)

May 14-16 – LWVC Leadership Council, Sacramento

Saturday, May 22 – “Government Reform Proposals for the 2010 Ballots,” Valley Brewing Co. in Stockton, 9:30 a.m. to noon (see inside for details)

Thursday, June 10 – Board Meeting

Thursday, June 17 – Annual Meeting, Alder Market in Stockton, 5:30 p.m. (see inside for details)

**Note : The Board meets at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Hospice of San Joaquin, 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Members are welcome to attend Board meetings.**