



The Voter

**ELECTIONS
HAVE
CONSEQUENCES!**

**VOTE
ON
JUNE 3RD!**

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FINALLY: VOTERS FIRST!

The League of Women Voters of California is supporting the **California Voters FIRST redistricting initiative** which will establish an independent citizens' commission to draw legislative districts in an open, transparent process following fair, clear standards for district lines.



LWV President Janis Hirohama with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at press conference endorsing California Voters FIRST Act

LWV is asking its members to participate in signature gathering and the campaign to pass it in November 2008. This reform will eliminate the conflict of interest that occurs when legislators draw the lines and choose their constituents.

San Joaquin County has

seen the vagaries of legislatively drawn districts most clearly. There are four Assembly members representing the county. These members often share parts of the same community, e.g., Stockton, as well as having to represent the interests of completely disparate communities, e.g., Merced. This prime example of gerryman-

dering has left San Joaquin residents voice diminished in the legislature. This pattern is repeated in the congressional districting for San Joaquin County.

Every League household has received a petition in the mail. We need your help to get this important initiative on the November ballot.

The deadline for LWV to **receive** your signed petitions has been moved to **April 25th.**

Please get your petitions signed and sent in. With a politically balanced Commission, California votes will finally have their interests put FIRST!

Join Us for our ANNUAL MEETING

Here's a "heads up" and save-the-date notice, everyone. On **Thursday, June 19, 2008**, we'll be holding our ANNUAL MEETING at *Bud's Seafood & Grille* in Lincoln Center. The menu will be their combo meal, featuring beef tenderloin and marinated chicken breast, salad, potatoes & veggies, coffee or tea.

We'll even provide dessert. All for \$30.! So you don't even have to make any decisions about what to order. . . just make your reservation!

There will be more information in the May *VOTER* along with the Annual Meeting Kit. Reports from all our committee heads and Board members will be included in the kit for

you to read at your leisure, saving us a lot of time at the meeting. There will also be a "50/50" raffle fundraiser. So you definitely want to mark this one on your calendar and watch for details next month.

- Vickie Markarian

How to contact the League:

LWVSC
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204
209-465-0293
Email: LWVSC@gmail.com
www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org

President's Message — Ann Pentecost

By this time you should have received a mailing from LWVC with a petition for the California Voters First initiative, an important attempt to make redistricting reform a reality. I hope you will all make an effort to collect a few signatures for this proposed initiative. If we all send in the one we receive, it will be a good start for this effort.

California Voters FIRST makes redistricting proceedings and deliberations open, transparent, and accessible to all members of the public. In the past, legislators have hidden their conversations behind claims of legislative privilege to prevent discovery of illegal or otherwise racially discriminatory intent in crafting a redistricting plan. California Voters FIRST puts everyone on an equal footing with legislators and prohibits ex parte communications with Commissioners by legislators. Additionally all maps and testimony must be posted on the Internet for the public to review. If this is an effort near to your heart, you can get more

petitions, make a donation or volunteer to work on the campaign by going to www.CAVotersFIRTS.org or www.lwvc.org

The Candidates Forum sponsored by the League, Comcast, the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce and The Record will be held at the end of April. We will be covering the Supervisorial races and the Stockton Mayor's race. We have had inquiries from several organizations about working with the League on Candidate Forums. All have come too late to for the June primary. However, the Board is exploring some possibilities for November.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to work for the League at this year's Asparagus Festival. And an especially big "Thank You" to **Loralee McGaughey** for putting this all together for the League.

Meet Amy Yocum, Pacific Intern

Once again the League is fortunate to be working with a Pacific student intern. Amy Yocum is a senior at Pacific majoring in Psychology and Sociology.

Amy is a returning college student with a five-year-old daughter. She has done extensive volunteer work with organizations for health, education, gender issues, and substance abuse. For the past four years, she has volunteered as a medical advocate for people with substance abuse issues. Her specialty is the laws that govern people on methadone maintained treatment (methadone is a treatment for all kinds of opiate abuse). Amy relates that "My experience as a medical advocate has dramatically im-



pacted my life and made me realize that it is up to me, as an individual, to try and change things.

I am looking forward to working with the League of Women Voters

and learning more about the organization. In particular, I am interested in learning about how the LWV has impacted the San Joaquin Valley."

Amy is working on a history of our local League and is coordinating the efforts of all the Pacific students who are volunteering for the League this year. Welcome, Amy.

LWVSJC Board of Directors for 2006-2007

Officers

Ann Pentecost—President
599-7541 Pann371@aol.com

Peaches Ehrich, 1st VP/Fundraising
969-3944 peachy1151@yahoo.com

Cate White, 2nd VP/Advocacy
823-3381 blckbrd98@aol.com

Susan Loyko, Secretary
943-1575 (h) smloyko@comcast.net

Sylvia Kothe, Treasurer
464-1004 Sylwv@aol.com

Directors

Colleen Foster, Voter editor
951-2311, malialani@comcast.net

Vickie Markarian, Speakers Bureau
823-1486 (h) hyeorty@comcast.net

Daphne Shaw, At Large
952-2186 dshaw1@sbcglobal.net

Esther Vasquez, At Large
474-9796 Vasquez@inreach.com

Jane Wagner-Tyack, At Large
365-1986 janetyack@mac.com

Off Board

Carolyn Pometta—SJC Commission on the Status of Women Liaison
473-2256, C.pometta@sbcglobal.net

Pat Thomas—Membership Secretary
Pmthomas@pacbell.net

Barbara Walker—Membership Database
463-4919 bt451@pacbell.net

Nominating Committee

Dee Matteucci, Chair; Tandy Gotschall, Sally Miller and two Board members to be appointed: Peaches Ehrich & Colleen Foster

Helen Pearson Award Committee

Vickie Markarian, Chair; Sylvia Kothe, Cate White

LWVUS Board Adopts Immigration Position

After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members, the LWVUS Board of Directors unanimously adopted the League's position on immigration which calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants. "As part of overall immigration reform, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria," Wilson stated. "We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity," she said. Other elements of the League's position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals who enter the U.S., and significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers.

The full immigration policy approved by the national League's Board of Directors in March was studied by the organization's membership for more than eighteen months. The policy achieved member consensus through a survey of the nearly 850 local Leagues.

The League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S., including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and studying in the U.S.

The League will use this recently adopted position to guide its advocacy work on federal legislation introduced on this very important public policy issue. State and local Leagues may oppose efforts in their communities to deport, detain or harass unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity

LWVUS Immigration Position

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.



The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the United States

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;

- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the

(Continued on page 4)

WHAT DOES THE NATIONAL LEAGUE DO FOR YOU?

In 2004, LWVUS published a short piece answering the question: What does the National League do for you? Although the publication is a few years old, the question—and the answers—are still relevant. Below are excerpts from that 2004 publication.

The national Per Member Payment (PMP) accounts for approximately 28% of the income for the League at the national level, providing partial support for our advocacy efforts, field support to state and local Leagues, leadership publications, the National Voter, convention and council. So, if when you are collecting member dues you are asked, “What do we get in return for the money we send to the national League?”, here is a sampling of how PMP monies are put to use to serve our members and further the organization’s mission.

COMMUNICATION: visibility, reputation, credibility and action—these are some of the intangibles that generate positive responses to the League and our work. Communication efforts such as press releases on action we take on issues (e.g., election reform or campaign finance reform) and our efforts around civic engagement [contribute to this visibility]. The National Voter, our e-newsletter, our Web site and electronic lists [are also communication tools].



ADVOCACY: LWVUS lobbies Congress and the executive branch on League positions. We keep Leagues informed and up to date on issue areas.

INFORMATION: LWVUS provides publications on League issues, study guides and voter education materials, legislative updates as well as “how-to” materials for League leaders.



VOTER’S SERVICE: The LWV Ed Fund (LWVEF) supports the

League’s voter education efforts, provides operational assistance and guidance on candidate debates, responds to inquiries on polling places, voter registration, etc.,

SERVICE TO LEAGUES: LWVUS supports Leagues on a variety of issues including how to revitalize a local League, how to form consensus, how to lobby, how to write a press release, etc. LWVEF provides local/state League with education fund accounts to enable them to raise tax-deductible funds for educational projects while avoiding the administrative burdens connected with maintaining such accounts. No fees are charged for this.

TRAINING: LWVUS provides training on leadership, voter service, diversity, membership recruitment/retention, strategic planning, working with the media and advocacy as requested at state League events throughout the year. We also provide training opportunities for League leaders and members at LWVUS convention and council meetings.

MEMBER DATABASE: LWVUS maintains a database of over 500,000 members and supporters. Leagues receive membership rosters and other data-

base reports.

CONVENTION AND COUNCIL MEETINGS: Council meetings provide state League leadership the opportunity to network, receive training and raise issues important to the membership in their state.



Convention provides all League members the opportunity to come together to discuss League issues, network, receive recognition for programs, sell products and meet members of the LWVUS board and staff. It is also the time for members to make changes to LWVUS bylaws, lobby and vote on the biennial program, elect members of the LWVUS Board of Directors and adopt the LWVUS budget.

FIELD SERVICE: Members of the LWVUS Board of Directors and staff travel to various state League events throughout the year to provide workshops and updates on LWVUS/LWVEF activities to League members.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTS:

LWVUS provides various publications for League to use, e.g., *In League, Looking for Sunshine: Protecting Your Right to Know*, and *Electing the President* as well as membership brochures, and brochures for Leagues to use in working with funders and other organizations.



Immigration Position Adopted

(Continued from page 3)

country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy re-

forms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Our local League participated in this study. Our recommendations to LWVUS were substantially those that have been adopted by the national League.

- Editor

The Other Side of the Coin: Local League Finance

The League of Women Voters is structured a bit like the US government: we have Leagues at the local, state and national levels. Our financing is like the government's, too — the local level has the smallest pot.

The article on the previous page outlines what local Leagues receive from LWVUS for our Per Member Payment—the amount that each League pays *per member* to the national League. We also owe a Per Member Payment to the state League—and, similarly, we receive services. Some, as with the national League, support voter services efforts, e.g., publication each election season of the Pros and Cons of state ballot measures. Most League members and many members of the community rely on the information the state League provides to help us be informed voters. The state League also lobbies the state legislature on issues the League has studied and made a priority.

They provide insurance for local Leagues which we would very likely not be able to afford individually. This insurance covers us for liability when we participate in public events and at a group rate that makes this coverage possible. The state League also hosts the server for our Web page, another service that is beyond the financing or the technological expertise—or both—of many local Leagues.



So, local Leagues do get benefits from both the state and national Leagues.

BUT—at a serious cost.

Our local League dues are \$50—and have been for several years. Of that \$50:

- LWVUS gets \$21.
- LWVUS gets \$26.80

- *LWVUS gets \$2.20*
Yes, two dollars and twenty cents.

The national League is proposing to raise the national PMP by \$1.20, making the total per member payment \$28.00—leaving our local League portion of membership dues: \$1.00!

Understandably, the LWVUS Board voted unanimously to vote against raising the national PMP when it comes up for a vote at Convention in Portland in June.

The Board will discuss whether to propose a local membership dues increase at our next Board meeting on May 13th. Membership is invited to attend that Board meeting (to be held at Hospice in Stockton at 5:30 p.m.) - or to call any Board member (listed on Page 2).

Painless Fundraising

Given the financial realities of League finances noted above, we need to find some creative ways to add to our coffers.

We have a suggestion.



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. You won't miss it — and we'd love to have the donation.

In advance, THANKS!

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

The LWVUS Board is engaged in many League activities this spring:

- Daphne Shaw is coordinating candidate forums to be televised at Comcast on April 30th. The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce and The Record join the League and Comcast as partners in this forum which will feature the mayoral race for the City of Stockton and candidates for the County Board of Supervisors/Districts 1 and 3. These races were chosen for the 3 hour time slot provided by Comcast because they are hotly contested (six candidates for mayor, five for District 1 and four for District 3) and each of these races *could* be decided

in June if any one candidate receives 50% +1 votes.

- Jane Wagner-Tyack, Cate White and Daphne Shaw are pursuing appointments with local legislators Aghazarian and Nakanishi for the League's annual legislative interviews.
- Vickie Markarian is arranging to get our section of Smart Voter up and running.

The Board was also asked to consider a role in the debate about whether or not the City of Stockton should take over PG&E. The Board took a "watch" stance until the City takes further action.

Focus on LWVUS/LWVC

LWVC

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE!

In our Action/Advocacy role, the League is non-partisan but we use our positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest. **We never take positions on candidates or political parties.**



In the June 3rd election, LWVC recommends a **"NO"** vote on **Proposition 98** and a **"YES"** vote on **Proposition 99**.

NO ON PROPOSITION 98

Deceptive Measure Would Abolish Rent Control and Harm Environmental Protection

Californians deserve protection from eminent domain abuse, but Proposition 98 is a radical proposal that goes too far. Its extreme provisions would eliminate rent control and other renter protection laws; that is why wealthy apartment and mobile home park owners have contributed most of the money to qualify Proposition 98 for the ballot. In addition, Proposition 98 contains language that would make it difficult to protect the environment and regulate land use, growth and development. This hidden agenda would threaten water quality, hurt the environment, and thwart regulations that protect our neighborhoods.

YES ON PROPOSITION 99 **Homeowners Protection Act**

This measure is a real eminent domain reform measure that will protect homeowners, without the hidden agendas and adverse consequences of Proposition 98.

Proposition 99 will prohibit the government from using eminent domain to take a home to transfer to another private party. It is supported by a broad coalition of homeowners, business, labor, cities, counties and environmentalists.

LWVUS

LWVUS Proposes Increase in FY 2008-2009 PMP

The LWVUS Board passed a budget that will be sent to delegates to vote on at the national Convention in June. The budget proposes a 4.5 percent cost of living increase in PMP (\$1.20). It is based on a planned level of activity at approximately the same level as the past two years and a realistic assessment of current projections of income for the next fiscal year. If approved at Convention, the proposed PMP increase would result in an LWVUS PMP of \$28.00 per member with a one-half PMP for household members.

LWVUS Urges the Senate to Pass and Strengthen S. 2191, America's Climate Security Act

The League urged Congress to pass America's Climate Security Act, legislation that would establish the basic framework necessary to curtail the pollution that is causing climate change.

S. 2191 establishes a "cap and trade" system that will, if properly carried out, achieve two essential goals: cutting green-house gas emissions enough to prevent the worst impacts of global climate change, and doing so in an economically efficient manner.

The League urged that the legislation be strengthened to include all the reductions that will likely be needed and expanded to include more emissions

earlier in the process. LWVUS also opposed weakening amendments, particularly loopholes that undermine the emissions cap through such mechanisms as a so-called "safety valve" that would allow sources to purchase unlimited emission allowances.

LWVUS Establishes Taskforce on Election Audits

LWVUS President Mary Wilson announced the establishment of an Election Audits Taskforce

The Taskforce will focus on what the features of an election auditing process should be in order to best protect the voters and provide confidence in the voting process.

The Taskforce will spend the next months reviewing and researching a number of questions related to election audits, and will provide information to the LWVUS Board.

League, PBS Join Forces to Encourage Civic Participation

The League and PBS's *American Experience*, television's most watched history series, are joining forces to encourage voter engagement and education in 2008. As part of the recently launched "The Presidents" biographies project, which offers an intimate and compelling look at the modern presidency, PBS is highlighting the importance of voter participation.

League Urges Representative Wynn to Step Down As Member of House Energy Committee to avoid conflicts of interest. He has agreed to join a lobbying firm that represents clients whose interests may come before the Energy Committee.

Of Interest to Members

Environment Committee At Work

The Environment Committee decided its short range goal is to become better informed and to identify key experts and stakeholders, as well as, key legislation regarding water issues. Eventually, a forum may be appropriate, however, the timing, scope and scale of that project is yet to be decided and will most likely depend on water issues, legislation and public activities currently on the table at the local, regional and state levels.

Jane Wagner-Tyack, Environment Committee Co-chair, is developing an information table outlining water agencies, contact information, agency responsibilities and other relevant water information. When completed, we will post it on our League's web page. The Committee is also keeping track of peripheral canal issues.

Jane and Committee Chair Esther Vasquez have been attending meetings of the San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Advisory Water Commission, the San Joaquin County Council of Governments, San Joaquin Council of Government's Citizens Advisory Committee, Blue Print Leadership Group, and the Goods Movement Task Force.

Esther also attended the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers open house for the San Francisco Bay to Stockton Improvement Project (EIS/EIR). This project will evaluate the efficiency of the movement of goods along the existing deep draft navigation route extending from the San Francisco Bay to the Port of Stockton. Information on this project can be found on SPNETPA@usace.army.mil. Comments can be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps at 1455 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, 1398.

- Esther Vasquez

Live Green San Joaquin

Earth Day, April 20, 2008
www.livegreensanjoaquin.org

Ever been curious about how solar cookers work, or what's polluting our Delta, or how farmers grow our food? Find the answers to these questions and more at the 20th Annual Earth Day Festival on Sunday, April 20, 2008 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Victory Park, behind the Haggin Museum.

The annual event is a partnership between the City of Stockton, San Joaquin County, University of the Pacific, the San Joaquin County Office of Education and the Peace & Justice Network. This year's theme is Live Green San Joaquin.

There will be lots of educational displays and interactive activities for young and old alike to help us all learn about protecting our precious natural resources. There will be lots of entertainment, good food and fun, and best of all there is no charge.

Earth Day will feature a tribute to Fran Abbott, Earth Day organizer (and League member). Fran was a visionary and change-maker that motivated others with her playful and passionate spirit.

"Those of us who have worked with Fran on the Earth Day Festival and other projects will miss her smile, spirit and joy. As tribute to her dedication and tireless efforts in mentoring young people, we have initiated a scholarship/grant program in her name for students and teachers to promote environmental education in schools throughout our community. We think Fran would have liked that."

- Susan Loyko

Our League will be participating in Earth Day again this year. Stop by to say Hi.

WELCOME

to new Members
Dana Cowell
Marta Johnson
Katrina Jaggears
Bertha Mitchell

and to renewing members
Pauline Almaas
Betty Belohlavek
Teresa Chen
Gay Ecton
Paul Underhill

With Sympathy

The League offers its sincere condolences to Vickie Markarian on the passing of her mother-in-law.

In Memoriam

LWVSJC thanks the following people who made a contribution to our Ed Fund in honor and memory of Fran Abbott:

- Pat Clark
- Colleen Foster
- Sylvia Kothe
- Dee Matteucci

Helen Pearson Award

It's time to start thinking of that special League member who has done something exceptional for the League this year and has done it with strong commitment and a sense of humor. If you have a nominee for this most prestigious award from our League, contact Vickie Markarian, Sylvia Kothe or Cate White.



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

www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org

CALENDAR

Earth Day: April 20, 2008—Victory Park, 11:00-5:00

Asparagus Festival: April 25, 26, 27, 2008—Weber Point

Candidate Forums telecast by Comcast: April 30, 2008, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

REGISTER TO VOTE BY MAY 3RD TO VOTE IN THE JUNE ELECTION. TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

ANNUAL MEETING: June 19, 2008—6:00 p.m. BUD'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT: \$30.00

LWVC Leadership Council is scheduled for May 16-18, 2008 in Sacramento.

LWVUS Convention: June 13-17, 2008, Portland, Oregon

Board Meetings

All League members are welcome to attend Board meetings. Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at Hospice of San Joaquin.

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.