



The Voter

Members meet to plan LWVSJC Program for the coming year

On January 21, LWVSJC members met at the home of Bill and Susan Loyko for brunch and program planning for the 2012-13 League year.

Participants identified four key issues for study and action in the coming year.

(1) Funding alternatives to the loss of redevelopment funds and agencies: What happens to projects started with redevelopment money? What other revenue sources are available? How will loss of redevelopment impact the county?

(2) Community Sustainable Agriculture: What are the issues facing local farmers? How can the League support small-scale local farming?

(3) Local impact of immigration: What issues do the county's various ethnic groups face? What is the process for citizenship in these immigrant groups? How can we address some of the less-well-known impacts of immigration?

(4) Stormwater: What are the issues regarding flooding and water quality? How can we address them?

These issues will form the basis of panel discussions, presentations, and other events during the coming year as we look for ways to partner with others in the community to educate ourselves and the citizens of San Joaquin County.



Left to right: Kathy Casenave and Susan Mora Loyko at the January program planning meeting.



Winter President Bea Lingenfelter addressing participants at the January program planning meeting.

President's Message

Are you taking advantage of all the League activities in our 2011/12 calendar this year? This Fall we had a great Kick-Off at Delicato Winery celebrating the 100th year of women's suffrage in California. But we didn't stop there.

In October we met to educate ourselves and the community on critical environmental issues, and in November we started our participation in a LWVUS study of Privatization. This study is very relevant to our circumstances in San Joaquin County with the recent proposal to privatize our libraries and with ongoing privatization or consideration to privatize other governmental functions and services. We continue leaning more about this issue on February 18 with a Consensus meeting on March 17. Mark your calendars for these two important meetings.

The article on page 1 of this Voter reports on our January 21 Program Planning meeting, the meeting at which we choose the issues on which we will educate ourselves and others in the coming year.

Also in January, we tried a new format called Lunch and Learn. We gathered at Mimi's on January 26 to hear about concerns and programs related to adult literacy in the county. Stockton ranked last in a survey of 75 large cities in literacy rate of adults. We learned what can and is being done. Another Lunch and Learn is scheduled for May 17 on the State Budget. On April 14 we will hold a meeting on Health Care Reform and SB810, looking at federal and state health care reform legislation.

Become involved. The League needs you, and you need the League to stay informed and be part of the solutions to county, state and national problems. Come to a meeting. We guarantee you'll like it.

Bea Lingenfelter, President

Congratulations to three League members

Our congratulations to **Van Ha To-Cowell** for being chosen as a recipient of one of this year's Susan B. Anthony awards. We know how deserving she is of this honor.

Jeanne-Marie Velickovic has accepted a new position as a dean at Mount San Antonio College in the Los Angeles area. We will miss her energy and enthusiasm as a board member. She had a great gift for helping us to connect with non-League allies, particularly at Delta College, where she was a professor.

We also congratulate **Angela Arroyo** on her promotion to work on the re-election campaign of Congressman Jerry McNerney. Unfortunately for us, she cannot serve on the board if she is working on a political campaign.

With the loss of Jeanne-Marie and Angela, we have two vacancies on the LWVSJC board of directors. Anyone interested in serving for the remainder of the year (until June 2012) may contact President Bea Lingenfelter at beaal@comcast.net, 765-0576.

Lunch and Learn on Literacy

Twenty-one League members and others met at Mimi's Restaurant on Thursday, January 26 for a Lunch and Learn meeting on literacy in San Joaquin County. Suzanne Daveluy, Youth Services Coordinator for Literacy, Outreach and Programming at Cesar Chavez Central Library in Stockton, gave a spirited presentation on the challenges facing San Joaquin County and the rewards of helping adults learn to read.

Daveluy said that 23% of San Joaquin County residents – 157,000 adults – lack basic literacy skills; eleven California counties have higher illiteracy rates. Nationally, California has the highest rate of residents (23%) lacking literacy skills.

She cited a National Institutes of Health study showing that a mother's reading skill is the greatest indicator of a child's academic success. That is why, she said, "We have to help the whole family." Story times for children are one way to draw parents into the adult literacy program, which matches volunteer tutors with adults who want to learn to read.

Daveluy is determined to keep the adult literacy program going, despite heavy state budget cuts. Anyone interested in volunteering can reach her at suzy.daveluy@ci.stockton.ca.us

SJCOG Citizens Advisory Committee seeking League member

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) has an opening for a member to represent LWVSJC. The CAC provides community input on project priorities and other matters pertaining to the Measure K program. Committee members are appointed by the SJCOG Board and represent the geographical, social, cultural, and economic mix of the region.

The CAC meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at the SJCOG Regional Center, 555 E. Weber Avenue, Stockton. The meetings are held at 6:00 p.m.

If you would be willing to represent the League on this committee, please contact Jane Wagner-Tyack at JaneTyack@mac.com or (209) 365-1986.

The League looks at campaign reform

Two years ago the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, ruled that corporations and associations could spend as much money as they want on political ads. The majority in the 5-4 decision said that political contributions are a form of protected speech under the First Amendment and that corporations have the same rights as any citizen to donate to a political cause.

This decision led to an unprecedented increase in the influence of money on American elections through the emergence of ultra-powerful "super PACs," independent political action committees that can receive unlimited donations and spend them for or against candidates and issues.

According to a January 21 editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Since the beginning of the 2012 presidential election season, conservative super PACs have spent more than \$30 million, and liberal groups, just getting started, have spent more than \$2 million. Projections for total spending by November exceed \$1 billion."



LWVUS is addressing the risk to democracy posed by the *Citizens United* decision by focusing on campaign finance reform. The national League is taking applications until March 1 for a Campaign Finance Reform Task Force. (The application can be accessed [here](#).) LWVUS does not support a constitution amendment for a variety of reasons, including the difficulty of passage. A memo explaining the LWVUS position is available on the LWVC [members only website](#).

California's response

One piece of California legislation addressing funding of political ads was the California Disclose Act, AB1148 (Brownley), which was endorsed by the League of Women Voters of California. This law would have required the largest major funders of political ads for candidates and ballot measures to be clearly and unambiguously identified on all advertising, including radio, TV, print, and mass mailers.

At the end of January, AB1148 failed by two votes to get the two-thirds majority required to pass out of the Assembly and move on to the Senate. The future of this proposal is uncertain. One possibility is that it could go on the ballot as a referendum for voters to decide.

Another piece of proposed legislation addressing *Citizens United* is an assembly joint resolution, AJR 22, authored by Assembly members Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont) and Michael Allen (D-Santa Rosa). Passage of AJR 22 will tell Congress that the California Legislature wants a constitutional amendment to overturn the *Citizens United* ruling.

For an update on when AJR 22 will be heard, perhaps later this month, call Wieckowski's capitol office, (916) 319-2020. Since LWVUS does not support a constitutional amendment, members who wish to lobby in support of AJR 22 must make it is clear that they are speaking as individuals, not for the League. That would include not mentioning that they are League members.

Update on Legislation and State League Activities

Single-Payer Health Care

SB 810, legislation to put in place single-payer health care in California, is dead (again) for this session. LWVSJC advocacy director Cate White reports that some legislators apparently arranged to be out of the room at the time of the vote. Says SB 810 author Mark Leno, “This setback does not change our work to advocate for universal health care. We have always found the courage to speak out for health care for all, even when others around us told us it was not the right time.”

Death Penalty

LWVC is supporting the SAFE California Act, an initiative to abolish the death penalty. SAFE stands for Savings, Accountability, Full Enforcement. The initiative would stop executions and replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment (life without the possibility of parole), including the conversion of existing death sentences to that alternative. More information is available at <http://www.safecalifornia.org/facts/about>

Initiative and Referendum Study

During the LWVC Convention in May 2011, delegates adopted an update of the initiative and referendum process in California. The state study committee has been chosen and has adopted a study scope, budget, and tentative timeline. They will develop study materials to be used by local Leagues for consensus meetings, which will be in late 2012 or early 2013, after the 2012 presidential election.

Details are on the LWVC [website](#).

Last October, LWVC Senior Director for Program Trudy Schafer moderated a panel discussion on the subject, hosted by LWV Los Angeles. A video of that panel discussion is available [here](#). It is long but very informative.

Water

The LWVC water listserv has been reactivated for statewide discussions. To subscribe and participate, go to the ListServes and e-Newsletters [page](#) on the LWVC website, scroll down almost to the bottom of the page, and follow the directions.

In 2009, the Legislature placed an \$11.14 billion water bond on the November 2010 ballot, then put it off until 2012 because of fears that it wouldn't pass in the strained economic climate. Similar fears this year have bond proponents wondering whether to postpone the bond again or pare it back. Opponents think they should either leave it on the November 2012 ballot for taxpayers to vote on or repeal it altogether. Governor Brown reportedly would rather not have a large water bond on the ballot competing with his tax initiative. Stay tuned, and contact Jane Wagner-Tyack (365-1986) if you would like to know more.

Public Safety Realignment

By Raul Sanchez

In an effort to address overcrowding in California's prisons and help alleviate the State's financial crisis, the Public Safety Realignment Act (Assembly Bill 109, 2011) was signed into law on April 4, 2011. AB 109 transfers responsibility for supervising specified lower level inmates and parolees from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to counties.

A local implementation plan was developed by a Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) including public safety officers, officers of the court, corrections officers, and people involved in human services. The plan was approved by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors on August 30, 2011.

For the time period October 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, CDCR estimated that San Joaquin County would be responsible for 825 offenders in three categories: Post release community supervision; non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders; and parole violators with new terms. Beginning July 2013, parole revocation hearings will be heard by the local Superior Court.



For the specified nine-month period, the State provided San Joaquin County with \$7,657,900 in funding to implement the plan.

The CCP has been meeting since May 2011 and identifying system changes necessary to successfully implement AB 109. The Partnership has conducted a local needs assessment to determine which programs are in existence, which could be easily expanded, and which could be created to fill the gaps. The Probation Department has been designated as the county agency responsible for administering programs directed to the post release community supervision population.

At the center of the AB 109 Plan is the use of a validated risk and needs assessment instrument and case planning addressing individual needs. Once risks and needs are identified, the offender is referred to the appropriate intervention strategy.

Dana Cowell passes away

We note with regret the passing in January of League member Dana Cowell after a long battle with cancer. Dana was Deputy Director of the San Joaquin Council of Government (SJCOG) and was named “Transportation Manager of the Year” last year by the California Transportation Foundation for his dedication to overcoming obstacles to transportation projects.

We could always count on Dana to update the League about transportation issues. Among his many professional accomplishments, Dana fought for critical safety improvements about to go into construction along State Route 12 through San Joaquin County; led a partnership with Caltrans to develop intersection upgrades between Interstate 5 and Potato Slough Bridge; worked with Sacramento and Bay Area transportation leaders to craft the Northern California Trade Corridor Projects; and directed SJCOG’s organization of the Valley Wide State Transportation Improvement Program.

He also initiated SJCOG efforts to advance modeling techniques and planning tools in response to Senate Bill 325, which requires reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

We offer our condolences to Dana’s wife Van Ha To-Cowell and to his sons Evan and Andrew.

Thank You!

Thank you to the following members for making donations to help cover the cost of printing and postage for the membership directories and November Voter newsletters.

***Donna Brown
Colleen Foster
Craig Holmes
Patricia Lindenberg
Helen Mar
Dee and Al Matteucci
Loralee McGaughey
Diane Morgali
Diane Park
Carole Patridge
Raul Sanchez
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Mary Lois Thompson
Van Ha To-Cowell
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Calendar

February 16	Susan B. Anthony Dinner
February 18	Privatization Study Meeting, Central Methodist Church, Pacific Avenue, Stockton
March 17	Privatization Study Meeting, Central Methodist Church, Pacific Avenue, Stockton
April 14	Speaker: Health Care Reform/SB810 Update, location to be announced
April 22	Earth Day
April 27, 28, and 29	Asparagus Festival
May 17	Lunch & Learn: State Budget May Revise/Update, Mimi's
May 18, 19, and 20	LWVC Leadership Council, Sacramento
June 7	Annual Meeting, location to be announced

The board of directors meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at Marie Callender's on March Lane in Stockton. LWVSJC members are welcome.

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.