



# The Voter

## Report on 2012 Annual Meeting

LWVSJC held its 2012 Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 7 at Hilton Stockton. Members voted to increase household dues to \$100 per year and adopted the following issues for Education in 2012-2013:

- Funding alternatives to the loss of redevelopment funds and agencies
- Community sustainable agriculture
- Local impact of immigration
- Stockton stormwater issues

Michael Fitzgerald, Metro Columnist for the *Stockton Record*, spoke on “Stockton: Who’s responsible? What’s the solution?” His talk was based on his research into 5,000 pages of Stockton fiscal documents, searching for the roots of Stockton’s fiscal meltdown. Among the reasons for Stockton’s situation, according to Fitzgerald:

- \$1.6 billion in claims from retiree benefits in what amount to “a Lamborghini Plan for a low-wage, agrarian economy”
- Part-time council relying on staff to get analyses, and sometimes not being briefed at all

*Continued*



*Vickie Markarian gives Bea Lingenfelter the 2012 Helen Pearson Award.*

*This year's September 15<sup>th</sup> Kick-off meeting at Delicato Winery will focus on agricultural policy with a talk by Kari Hamerschlag of the Environmental Working Group, "At Odds: The Federal Farm Bill and Good Food for All." See pages 7 and 8 for details.*

*Annual Meeting continued*

- A “puzzling” lack of paper trails, with decisions being made administratively; it appears that expenditures were sometimes approved in secret
- A lack of oversight that resulted in problems like \$7 million in unpaid parking tickets

Referring to the \$125 million pension bond floated by the city to pay for pensions, Fitzgerald said, “Stockton went broke years ago.” He blamed the mayor and the city manager from 1991-2001, but also noted that Stockton’s situation is part of a statewide, nationwide trend that followed the burst of the dot-com bubble. “Twenty cities are in the same shape as Stockton,” he said. “We just haven’t heard about them yet.”



*Stockton Record Metro columnist Mike Fitzgerald*

(Editor’s note: Since Stockton declared bankruptcy, both Mammoth Lakes and San Bernardino have done so.)

Some of Fitzgerald’s suggestions for getting Stockton on a firm fiscal footing involve “embracing who we are.” Basing government salaries on salary surveys ignores the fact that Stockton can’t compete with a city like Huntington Beach. He would get rid of a variety of compensation strategies favored by labor and put a cap on bonds the city council can float without a vote.

He pointed out that Stockton still has a great undeveloped waterfront, but he suggested building “two-and-a-half star projects that fit a working class, blue-collar town.”

Finally, Fitzgerald urged citizens to look at every proposed expenditure and make the city justify it. He regrets that much of the bad government he criticized happened on his watch, but noted that the Fourth Estate can’t follow everything. He urged others to get involved in observing City Hall and monitoring how the City spends taxpayers’ money.

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## President's Message

### *IN MEMORY OF SYLVIA KOTHE*

Dear League Friends,

As many of you know, long time League member and social justice advocate Sylvia Kothe passed away on June 6, 2012. Until the evening she went to the hospital emergency, Sylvia was teaching water aerobics. (See her in a YouTube video [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyuk4TfQNXA), or go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyuk4TfQNXA>.)

Sylvia's vitality and good humor sustained all those who came in contact with her. For those of us who were fortunate enough to know her and grow with her in League, we can attest to her intelligence and keen insight into public policy issues. She was an advocate who was not afraid to confront prominent interests; yet she had a strong commitment to the principles of the League and would never step beyond the bounds of our positions when acting. League positions sometimes restrain actions members wish to engage in, and, in those cases, Sylvia would find a way to join with other groups – or even start her own. However, her respect for the League never wavered.



Sylvia invited me to join League 35 years ago, when California was struggling with Prop 15. In 1976, the State of California placed a moratorium on new reactors until a solution to radioactive waste disposal was in place. We were disappointed that the League did not have an energy position to address our concerns. Sylvia joined with *Citizens for Safe Energy* to educate the public, and I joined a state League committee to encourage a study to develop a broader national League energy position. Our social outreach seemed to grow from there.

A glance at the dates when we reviewed our local League positions shows action on nearly all of them occurred during Sylvia's terms. She was elected president twice and served in almost every other office and capacity in between.

Sylvia was calm and clearheaded and a natural leader. Her death is a great loss to the League and our community. It is not possible for me to express how much I will miss her as a friend.

Diane Park  
President

*The SJC League wishes to establish a memorial in Sylvia's name. If you would like to send a memorial donation to honor her activism, remember that it will not be tax deductible. Please note for the "Ed Fund" if you wish a tax deduction.*

## Voter Services prepares for coming elections

The Voter Service Planning Committee has been hard at work since early June focusing on voter service activities for the November election. At this time, the following are either confirmed or are in process.

### Pros/Cons on ballot measures

There are eleven ballot propositions/initiatives on the November ballot. That tends to make voters weary and unsure about what each will mean. Our Pros/Cons presentations can provide the in-depth information voters need.

We have six Pros/Cons presentations scheduled covering the following areas: Manteca; Stockton (with OLLI – the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute from UOP); AAUW; the Lao Family Community Center; and Lodi (with OLLI). We are in process with Pros/Cons in Tracy and possibly Ripon. If you know of other groups interested in a Pros/Cons presentation, please contact Bea Lingenfelter at [beaal@comcast.net](mailto:beaal@comcast.net).

Vickie Markarian and Sabrina Birmingham are working on Smart Voter to encourage all candidates to post their information for voters. We also will be ordering Easy Voter Guides for distribution in September and October. If you would like Easy Voter Guides to distribute, please let Bea know.



### Candidate Forums in the planning and/or confirmation stages

- With UOP, a Forum with candidates for Congressional District 9 (McNerney/Gill) and State Assembly District 13 (Eggman/Jafri)
- With CSUS Stockton, a Forum with candidates for Congressional District 10 (Hernandez/Denham) and State Senate District 5 (Galgiani/Berryhill)
- Stockton City Council and Mayoral race (Johnston/Silva - Mayor) (Lowery/Zapien - District 4) (Tubbs/Fritchen - District 6); scheduled for Monday, October 1
- With Tracy Press, San Joaquin Board of Supervisor race (Ransom/Elliott)

We are hoping to digitally video as many forums as possible to post on YouTube and our website. We are currently seeking a digital camera plus, if possible, someone to do the taping. Please contact Bea at the address above or Bill Loyko ([wloyko@gmail.com](mailto:wloyko@gmail.com)) if you can help.

## Initiatives to be decided in November 2012

As of July 2012, eleven initiatives have qualified for the November ballot. A twelfth initiative, an \$11.14 billion water bond originally scheduled for the November 2010 ballot but postponed to this year, has been postponed again to November 2014 by the legislature so as not to compete with the Governor's tax increase initiative.

Here are the measures that will be decided in November:

- Government no longer allowed to automatically deduct union dues from paychecks
- Car insurance rates can be based on a person's history of insurance coverage
- Referendum on the State Senate Redistricting Plan
- "End the Death Penalty" Initiative
- Prohibition of Human Trafficking
- Repeal of the "Three Strikes" Law
- Mandatory Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food
- Income Tax Calculations for Multistate Businesses
- Molly Munger's State Income Tax Increase to Support Education Initiative
- Governor Jerry Brown's California Sales and Income Tax Increase Initiative
- Two-Year Budget Cycle

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## Update on the LWVC Initiative and Referendum Study

During the May 2011 LWVC Convention, delegates adopted an update of LWVC's study of California's initiative and referendum process. The study committee is working to develop the material that all local Leagues in California will use to come to consensus at meetings later this year or early 2013—after the 2012 presidential election.

The Committee is examining history, process (including the practices of other states), and key concerns, sifting through dozens of ideas to reform California's process. They are seeking to identify the deeper policy-based issues that will help shape the League's position on California's Initiative and Referendum process in the future. The reform ideas being examined cover a wide range of possibilities, from throwing out the whole process as suggested by Peter Schrag in *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future* to an embrace of the growing trend of direct democracy. Here are some of the more popular themes:

**Level the Imbalance of Money Interests** – Money spent by proponents *before* an initiative qualifies for the ballot can determine which measures even get qualified. To level the playing field, adjust qualification requirements to allow fewer signatures or allow more time to qualify an initiative. Some say the State could benefit by just charging proponents \$2 million to put an item on the ballot, rather than gathering signatures.

*Continued*

*Initiative and Referendum Study continued*

**Increase Transparency** – The shocking sums of money spent to influence voters *after* a measure has qualified for the ballot, while unlimited according to the Courts, can at least become more easily viewable. Improve accountability, disclosure and easy public access to information about the money that flows into and through the initiative process.



**Engage Citizens** – Use *deliberative polling* or a citizens’ initiative review panel to engage and educate the voting public about ballot measures. In Oregon panels of 24 voters, randomly-selected and demographically-balanced, come together from across the state to evaluate a ballot measure. The panels hear directly from campaigns for and against each measure and call upon policy experts during the multi-day public review. At the conclusion, each panel then drafts a *Citizens’ Statement* highlighting the most important findings about the measure. Separate panels are used for each ballot measure.

**Think Slowly; Work Together** – Restructure the *people’s initiative process* to include steps which are normally part of the *legislative process*—adding analysis, deliberation, debate, negotiation and the ability to amend the measure before balloting. Revisit the *indirect* initiative process by providing incentives of a lower signature threshold or longer circulation time to initiative proponents for *indirect* initiatives submitted to the Legislature.

**Use Technology** – Allow *e-gathering* of signatures on the Internet, or other utilization of technology to streamline or enhance the qualification process such as allowing a “no” to indicate an item should not appear on the ballot (balanced with concerns of disenfranchisement of non- computer literate or citizens without access to computers.)



There are multiple ways to find out more about the study and join in the ongoing discussion. There is a Facebook group (League of Women Voters of California Initiative and Referendum Study), a Yahoo Group that you can link to via the LWVC members only page, and a page on the League’s Initiative and Referendum Study [Web page](#), where the study committee will provide a continually updated list of articles and reading materials.

Consensus reports will be due in March 2013, allowing local Leagues time after the November 2012 election to hold consensus meetings. LWVSJC has scheduled time during the coming year to participate in the Initiative and Referendum Study. If you are interested in helping to facilitate this study, please contact President Diane Park at 477-7193.

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## Kick-off Meeting to focus on agricultural policy

Most of us don't pay any attention to the U. S. Farm Bill, but we should. The Farm Bill is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the federal government. Congress passes this omnibus bill every five years or so and will vote on it this year.

Farm bills have included sections on commodity programs, trade, rural development, farm credit, conservation, agricultural research, food and nutrition programs, and marketing. They thus have a huge impact on what we eat.

The Farm Bill and the impact of farm policies on Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) will be the topics of our Kick-off Fundraiser on September 15. Speaking on the Farm Bill will be Kari Hamerschlag, Senior Food and Agriculture Analyst for the Environmental Working Group.



*Kari Hamerschlag, Senior Food and Agriculture Analyst of the Environmental Working Group. (Photo credit: Kari Hamerschlag)*

In a recent [interview](#) published online by Nourishing the Planet, Hamerschlag explained the problems with the current Farm Bill, which gives away tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to large, profitable, environmentally damaging farm businesses and the companies that insure them. To pay for these subsidies, the Senate bill cut conservation and food stamp programs, as well as programs for rural development and for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers.

The main beneficiaries of programs proposed under the Farm Bill are the big five commodity crops (corn, soy, cotton, rice and wheat) that provide feed for livestock, raw material for processed food, and corn ethanol fuel for cars. "Meanwhile," notes Hamerschlag, "millions of consumers lack access to affordable fruits and vegetables."

Also speaking at the Kick-off Meeting will be local grower Farmer Bob of Fresh Edible Farms in Lathrop. He will talk about the challenges faced by Community Supported Agriculture.



*League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County*

**2012 KICK-OFF FUNDRAISER**

**At Odds: The Federal Farm Bill and  
Good Food for All**

**Kari Hamerschlag  
Senior Food and Agriculture Analyst  
Environmental Working Group**

Come and learn how federal policies support large-scale, chemical-intensive agriculture that harms the environment and makes farmers vulnerable to changing climate conditions. Find out how small-scale local farming and community-supported agriculture can create a healthier, more resilient food system.  
Also, learn about the local impact of farm policies from

**Farmer Bob of Fresh Edible Farms in Lathrop**

Saturday, September 15  
1 to 3:30 p.m.  
Locally-grown appetizers and wine

Delicato Winery, 12001 South Highway 99, Manteca

\$30 general, \$15 students

**2012 KICK-OFF FUNDRAISER**

Please mail this form no later than September 7 with your check to LWVSJC,  
P. O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

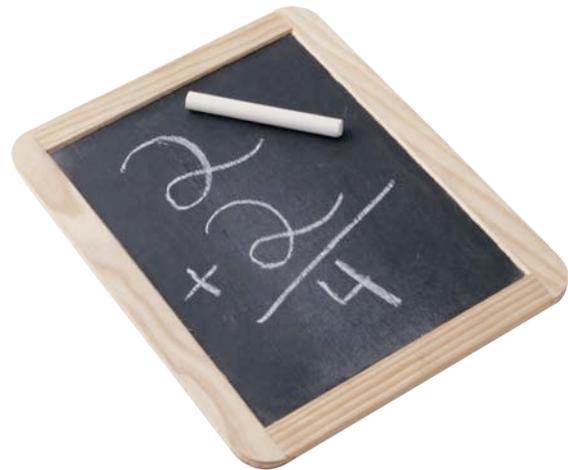
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## LEAGUE NOW LEADS IN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION POLICY

By Ellen Wheeler  
LWV Los Altos-Mountain View

[Awhile back] I related that League of Women Voters members mourned that they could not comment on federal education issues, such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, because LWV had never studied education at the federal level. Working to remedy that, League leaders got together in 2010 and worked to modernize their education positions by creating study questions on “The Federal Role in Public Education.” Then last year, Leaguers all over the country researched, discussed, and came to consensus on answers to those questions.

Now, finally, two years later, LWV has completed its study and published positions on federal education policy. School board members, state and federal office holders, research groups, the media, and “just regular people” who look to the League for trusted policy statements can cite them with confidence, just as they had for LWV’s state and local education positions.



As is often the case in life, at the end of this process the answers seem clear and common-sensical. Ideas such as the importance of high quality teaching, quality learning materials, well maintained educational facilities, and adequate funding sources are not controversial, but it’s useful to be able to cite them. Other League-supported ideas such as national assessments, parent education, and early childhood education are as fresh as our morning papers and blogs, with much ongoing conversation among well-meaning people about their value. And, to the relief of those who believe in state and local control of education, LWV recommends leaving implementation of accountability measures to those entities.

Our local League of Women Voters of Los Altos-Mountain View has posted the entire Federal Role in Public Education Position on its website. Go to [www.LWVLAMV.org](http://www.LWVLAMV.org) and take a look. It’s in the “Stands on Issues” section along the left side of the homepage. (Click “Recent studies.”) LWVUS has of course posted the position statement on its website: [www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org). Just type in “education” in the search box on their homepage and scroll down to find the two-page Federal Role in Public Education Position.

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## NEW DOCUMENTARY BY RESTORE THE DELTA

San Joaquin County will be affected to a major extent by plans now underway to build two massive tunnels to convey export water under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Proposed changes in flows will impact water quality for fish and for the Delta’s \$5 billion farm economy. They will influence land use by potentially claiming farm land for habitat. Local governments face another layer of government supervision in land use planning. And the costs will be borne not just by water users but by taxpayers throughout California.

To date, the story of the Delta has been told by interests outside this region that want to reshape the Delta for their own uses. *Over Troubled Waters*, a new documentary by Restore the Delta, sets the record straight on issues like water allocations, habitat stressors, the condition of Delta levees, and earthquake threat. Three theater screenings are scheduled: a premier in Sacramento on August 8, a local showing at the Empire Theater in Stockton on August 20, and a screening in Los Angeles on August 28 with a special appearance by the documentary’s narrator, Ed Begley, Jr. For more information and presale tickets, visit [RestoretheDelta.org](http://RestoretheDelta.org).

### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, August 9 – Board Meeting, Diane Park’s home

Monday, August 20 – Screening of *Over Troubled Waters*, the new documentary by Restore the Delta; at the Empire Theater in Stockton, 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 26 – Suffrage Day, the date in 1920 when the battle for women’s suffrage was won

Thursday, September 13 – Board Meeting

Saturday, September 15 – Kick-off Meeting. Delicato Winery, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Monday, October 1 – Stockton Candidates Forum, 4 to 8 p.m., City Council Chambers

Thursday, October 11 – Board Meeting

Saturday, October 20 – Membership Meeting and presentation on the impact of immigration; location and time TBA

**Except where noted, the Board meets at 5:30 p.m. at Marie Callender’s, 2628 March Lane, Stockton. Members are welcome to attend Board meetings.**

### LWVSJC Board of Directors for 2012-2013

#### Officers

Diane Park, President, July-September

Bea Lingenfelter, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Kathy Casenave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Mary Lois Thompson, Secretary

Jane Wagner-Tyack, Treasurer

#### Directors

Bill Loyko

Ronda Sanders

Kathy Schick

Patricia Voss

#### Voter Editor:

Jane Wagner-Tyack

# Thank you

to the following people for joining or renewing their  
LWVSJC membership as of July 20\*

Rosie Bachand  
 Mary Bava  
 Nancy Ballot  
 Bev Blum  
 Donna Brown  
 Kathy and John Casenave  
 Jim Darrah  
 Colleen Foster  
 Peggy Guttieri  
 Craig & Denise Holmes  
 Gladys Ikeda  
 Katrina Jaggears  
 Sylvia Kothe  
 Bea and Al Lingenfelter  
 Bill and Susan Mora Loyko  
 Helen Mar  
 Vickie Markarian  
 Loralee McGaughey

Cynthia Milford  
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 Moira Nichols  
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 Analiese Richard  
 Raul Sanchez  
 Ronda Sanders  
 Katherine Schick  
 Daphne Shaw  
 JoAnne Talbot  
 Mary Lois and Syd Thompson  
 Van Ha To-Cowell  
 Patricia Voss  
 Jane Wagner-Tyack  
 Cate and Walt White  
 Patricia Williams  
 Winfield Williams, Jr.

\*Note: Dues are delinquent after June 30.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$60 (individual)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 (sustaining – individuals who want to continue supporting the activities of LWVSJC but cannot participate regularly)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 (household – two or more members residing at the same address)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 (individuals 18 or older who are enrolled either full-time or part-time in an accredited institution)

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please **make checks payable to LWVSJC** and mail to **LWVSJC, P.O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204**



League of Women Voters  
of San Joaquin County  
P. O. Box 4548  
Stockton, CA 95204  
209-465-0293  
Email: lwvsjc@gmail.com  
On the web at [sjc.ca.lwvnet.org](http://sjc.ca.lwvnet.org)

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To make a tax deductible donation to the San Joaquin County League Fund (Education Fund), please make your check payable to LWVSJC Ed Fund and mail it to P. O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204.

You can also donate to the Ed Fund using your credit card or PayPal account by visiting our website, [sjc.ca.lwvnet.org](http://sjc.ca.lwvnet.org).

An advertisement for the League of Women Voters. It features a lit candle on the right side, with a bright flame. The background is dark. On the left, the words "Nonpartisan", "Grassroots", "Unbiased", and "Trustworthy" are stacked vertically in a white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, a short paragraph reads: "You know why you can rely upon the League of Women Voters. The League relies upon you, too." At the bottom, a solid orange banner contains the text "PLEASE DONATE NOW" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**Nonpartisan**  
**Grassroots**  
**Unbiased**  
**Trustworthy**

You know why you can rely upon the League of Women Voters. The League relies upon you, too.

**PLEASE DONATE NOW**

*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.*