



2008-2009

ANNUAL REPORT

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

of

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

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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.

2008-2009
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peaches Ehrich, President

Greetings and welcome to the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County's annual report for 2008/2009. I hope many of you are planning to attend our annual meeting on June 18th at Bud's Seafood Restaurant. I want to thank Vickie Markarian in advance for planning the meeting and making all the arrangements.

Vickie is one of the many League Members who has gone above and beyond as I have been the President. As some of you know, I was not sure if I would have time to do everything that your President needs to do. Now I am convinced that I don't. I am also convinced that Jane Wagner-Tyack, our incoming President is going to do a wonderful, wonderful job.

You will be reading all about the highlights of our previous year in this report. I think you will be impressed with our reports. We hosted several candidate forums, participated in community events and fundraisers as well as providing interesting and educational programs. I look forward to attending all the planned events for next year as just a plain member.

Personally, I would be remiss if I didn't say that without Colleen Foster I am not sure what this League would do. She is the backbone of this group and she should be "Member of the Year" every year.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Peach

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

REPORTS ON OUR LEAGUE YEAR

MEMBERSHIP

Report: FY 2008-2009

Information as of 5/15/2009

LWVSJC: total membership: 79

Membership breakdown

39 - Individual Local Members

16 - Household Local Members

24 - Members Who Joined Nationally (Rather Than Locally)

1 – Life Member (national)

New Members for the 2008-2009 year: 7

Members who didn't renew: 17

Membership is down again for the third straight year. Last year we had 85 members. Membership two years ago was 97 and the year before it was 103. While some moved away or have told us they will be taking a 'break' from League membership, most have just 'slipped away', even though all members are contacted by email and/or letter at the beginning of the new fiscal year. And the fact that 30% of our members joined nationally – and historically have no interest in being active locally – our membership is truly shrinking.

Membership recruitment *and retention* needs to be a focus if we are to maintain a vigorous League.

Note to Members:

We'd love to have your phone number and email. If your full contact information isn't in the roster, please forward it to us so we can keep you informed.

FINANCES

San Joaquin County League Fund

The **SJC League Fund** was created in December 1984 by Sylvia Kothe, Pearl West, and Barbara Walker to provide a tax-deductible mechanism to support the League's voter services activities, to manage the 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization which supports the League of Women

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Voters of San Joaquin County (the “League”) and to assure the funds were used for the correct purposes.

The Ed Fund

- Receives tax deductible donations;
- Reviews educational projects for nonpartisanship;
- Approves requests for transfers of funds to LWVSJC, when needed.

The League keeps \$10,000 in an Ed Fund CD. Interest income and direct contributions to the Ed Fund may be transferred to the San Joaquin County League for operating and voter services expenditures during the year.

As of 5/6/09, the SJC League Fund check book balance is \$1,939.40 and the CD balance is \$10,000.

- Ann Pentecost, Treasurer



MEMBERSHIP DUES

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.

To address the flow of money out of local coffers, the membership voted to raise dues by \$10 for individual League members. The Board is proposing a similar increase in dues for household members which will be voted on at this year’s Annual Meeting. So far this year, we are holding our own financially, due to the combination of dues increase and minimal expenditures for programs and activities during the year.

□ FUNDRAISING

Asparagus Festival: The League’s chief fundraising effort for the last few years has been our participation in the Asparagus Festival. Last year we made approximately \$1000.00 from this volunteer effort and we hope to do as well this year. Thanks to Bea Lingenfelter who coordinated the volunteers for us and to all the League members and friends of League members who participated in the Asparagus Festival for us this year. Thanks, too, to volunteers from League member Marcia Hernandez’ Sex and Gender class who also volunteered at the League booth.

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES



VOTER SERVICES

- Vickie Markarian

Speakers Bureau: The November 2008 General Election presented a number of challenges in all areas of voter services this past year. In addition to all the candidates running for various offices, there were several interesting propositions on the ballot and a great deal of demand for “pros & cons” presentations. Members Dee Matteucci and Vickie Markarian were able to handle a total of eleven different venues, including two presentations at S.J. Delta College (one to a continuing education class, one to the student political group “Pipeline”); Senior Centers and Senior Living facilities in Manteca and Stockton; public gatherings at churches, healthcare facilities, social clubs, and neighborhood groups; and announcements on KSTN radio. At all of these presentations, both Dee and Vickie gave out copies of the League’s “Pros & Cons” newsletter and the “Smart Voter” bookmarks.

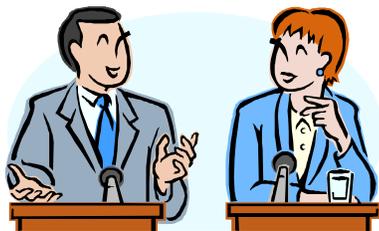
Smart Voter: It seemed like every community and school and/or fire district in the county held elections this past November. Consequently, Smart Voter contacted 158 candidates, sending out letters of invitation and instructions on how to put up a site. This was handled by Vickie Markarian, Smart Voter County Coordinator, with the help of one of our U.O.P. interns, Diana Vo. Each candidate also received a Smart Voter bookmark, and those who did not respond in a timely manner were contacted again via e-mail or phone. Out of the 158 candidates contacted, 63 (38.9%) put up sites on Smart Voter.

South County Candidates’ Forums: Board members Ann Pentecost, Jane Wagner-Tyack, and Vickie Markarian helped organize and moderate five candidates’ forums in the South County prior to the November ‘08 election. Ann took on the Ripon City Council forum, Jane covered the Tracy mayoral contest with the Youth Advisory Council, and Vickie moderated forums for the Ripon School Board and Fire District Board of Governors.

Easy Voter Guides: Easy Voter Guides were distributed by several members to local senior centers, libraries, group meetings, pros & cons presentations, and ethnic organizations, all of who were grateful for the additional and easy to read information.

May 19, 2009, Special Election: The upcoming special election on May 19 primarily focuses on ballot measures dealing with various budget issues. So far, both Dee and Vickie have set up several presentations on the pros & cons and will be handing out copies of the Easy Voter Guide at those venues. Unfortunately, the LWVC will no longer be publishing its “Pros & Cons” newsletter, so we will be depending on the Easy Voter Guides in the future.

▪ **Candidates' Forums** – *Daphne Shaw*



Comcast Candidate Forum:

The League sponsored the Comcast Candidate Forum with The Record and Comcast on September 24, 2008. Invitations were sent to 20 candidates in 10 races: three Assembly districts (10, 17, and 26), State Senate (5th District), U.S Representative (11th District), Board of Supervisors (1st District), Stockton Mayor, and three Stockton City Council districts (2, 4, and 6).

The candidates for all Stockton City Council districts, Stockton Mayor, State Senate and Assembly District 10 responded and were questioned by the panel. Jane Wagner-Tyack and Susan Loyko alternated as the League representative on the panels along with Donald Blount for The Record and Matt Wetstein, political science professor at Delta College.

Other Candidate Forums:

Delta College Stockton Mayor Debate: The League participated by vetting the questions from the audience.

Delta College Board of Trustees Debate: League member Jane Wagner-Tyack participated as a panelist and another League member helped to vet questions for the audience.

ACTION/ADVOCACY

LWVSJ Year in Advocacy 2008-2009

By Cate White

We have been busy advocating on a number of fronts this year. At the end of May last year, we were following the state budget situation. As the year progressed, problems with the budget have multiplied. Last summer, we invited Rebecca Gonzales from the California Budget Project to speak. She gave us a great over view on how the budget works, where the money goes, what some of the structural problems are, and some possible solutions. The state League lobbied hard for structural reforms, finding new revenue sources, and judicious cuts. A budget was finally passed in February, many months over due, and still out of balance in spite of some very painful cuts coupled with a sales tax increase. This April, we had a number of speakers from various county agencies explaining what current and possible future budget cuts will mean for the services they provide. This month (May) six state ballot propositions proposed by the legislature to help balance the budget will be put before the voters. LWVC has taken an oppose

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position on four of the six, on the grounds that they are stop-gap measures that do not offer the structural reforms we need and will do more harm than good in the long run. This is a situation we will continue to monitor for local and statewide ramifications.

Another ongoing issue we have been working on is Single Payer Healthcare. S.B. 840, the state Single Payer bill was passed again last summer by the state legislature and vetoed once more by Governor Schwarzenegger. With a new legislative session starting this January, the bill was introduced once again, this time by state Senator Mark Leno. The bill has a new number, S.B. 810. The first formal hearing before the Senate Health Committee took place on April 15, and I was present to record our strong support as a local League, along with representatives from LWVC who stated their support position. The bill was passed out of the committee, and is expected eventually to pass the legislature. We will continue to watch its progress.

LWVSJC Environment Committee 2008-2009

By Esther Vasquez



The Environment committee has aggressively advocated and vocalized adopted Natural Environment League policies with special emphasis on issues relative to water which is fundamental to economic development and land use/community evolution. Because of this nexus we have maintained a strong focus on the overall complexity and overlapping of public programming and decision making that affects or will affect future regional growth in the areas of land use, transportation infrastructure, planning, programming and financing. We are fortunate to have the privilege of holding local appointed representation on the San Joaquin County Council of Government's (SJCOG), Blueprint Leadership Working Group (Jane Tyack) and the Citizen's Advisory Committee (Esther Vasquez) which provides us with a credible place at the "decision-making" table and an avenue for public input. Additionally, for the last couple of years, our League has been represented at every meeting of the San Joaquin County Water Advisory Commission to which we made a power point presentation on the League's adopted Natural Resources policies and positions on water issues, transparency in governance, and diversion of Delta water to Southern California. Early in 2008 we took issue of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and the subsequent report from the Public Policy Institute Center (PPIC) that promotes the concept of a dual conveyance system (1982 peripheral canal concept), as economically justified to transport water from the Sacramento River bypassing the Delta to Southern California. This led to the drafting of a letter to State Secretary of Resources, Mike Chrisman, from our State League's president, Janis Hirohama objecting to the lack of local inclusion and government transparency, limiting water exports from the Delta and the subsequent press release on this subject.

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We have also been busy monitoring several pieces of legislation that include; SB 375 which attempts to limit green house gas emissions by curbing sprawl, AB 25 on surface water storage and the Bay Delta, AB 5 Central Valley flood protection, Proposition 1B bond financing, and several others including changes to the Measure K program, with special emphasis on state budget cut backs and program priority changes due to the decrease in projected revenue in the face of no state budget and recessionary times.

To increase our knowledge base we attended several symposiums that include; the Great Valley Center's January 26th Blueprint Summit in Fresno, February 7th, the Planning and Land Use Conservation League's conference, How to Participate in the Environmental Review Process, May 7th and 8th Great Valley Conference Green Momentum: Prospering in the New Economy and on the August 13th the Ground Water Resources Association's symposium, "Climate Change: Implications for Groundwater Management". Also, on January 31, several committee members attended the 2009 Bay Area League Day conference, "Water: California's New Gold". Thus far, this year we have attended the University of the Pacific's Center for Business Forecasting, Housing Forum on January 26th and have been awarded two scholarships to attend the Great Valley Center's conference 20/20 Foresight on May 6th and 7th in Sacramento.

We also participated in Earth Day and lent support to Restore the Delta's Water Symposium on January 24th as on the "water front". We are fortunate to have Jane Wagner-Tyack's leadership and commitment to the inclusion of addressing water issues and who has encouraged the committee's pursuit of water challenges. Highly instrumental in maintaining this level of effort is due to the commitment of all committee members and the tireless contributions of Bill and Susan Loyko, Diane Park, and Cate White.

We look forward to another rewarding and challenging year as we strive to bring to the forefront environment and climate change disclosure to the public.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Family Day in the Park



The League once again participated in the Family Day in the Park, an event held on the CSU Stanislaus/Stockton Campus. The event focuses on literacy and encourages participants to provide interactive activities for children. The League takes on the role of 'voter literacy', distributing Pros and Cons in election years, and provides coloring pages and other activities geared to election themes.

Thanks to the League members who volunteered for this well attended event in September.

Earth Day

Thanks to Peaches Ehrich for again organizing our participation in Earth Day at the Victory Park. We registered voters and distributed information about the League. Thanks to our volunteers from the University of the Pacific, Sex and Gender class for helping to staff our table.

Program Highlights

Kickoff Meeting



Retiring Senator Mike Machado was the guest speaker at our September 2008 Kick-off meeting. He spoke about State finances, the folly of ‘securitizing’ the lottery, problematic resurfacing of the Peripheral Canal proposal and the difficulties of passing a budget in a 2/3 majority state. His remarks were prescient.

Water Forum

The League encouraged its members to participate in Restore the Delta’s Water Forum which addressed water issues from a Central Valley perspective with a broad range of speakers.



Running for Office

During Women’s History Month, League members heard from several women elected officials about what it’s really like to run for office. Stockton Mayor Ann Johnston and Lincoln Unified School District Trustee Van Ha To-Cowell, both LWVSJC members, led off the program. Assemblymember Alyson Huber, Delta College Trustee and Board of Supervisors Candidate Anne Baird rounded out the panel in the most popular League program of the year.

Budget Impacts

In a grim but informative program, League members heard from several County officials about the impact of the State Budget crisis on local programs. Speakers included Bill Mitchell, Director the SJ County Public Health Department, Mick Founts, Deputy Superintendent at the County Office of Education, Dana Cowell, Deputy Director at SJ Council of Governments, Sheriff Steve Moore and Assistant Sheriff Reuben Orozco, Lani Schiff-Ross of SJ First Five and Wendy Moore, Deputy Directory/Human Services Dept.



Community Partner: *University of the Pacific*

Intern

Diana Vo, Pacific Political Science student, was our volunteer in the Fall and helped us with myriad voter services activities, particularly relating to candidate forums and Smart Voter.

Volunteers

Once again we were fortunate to have students from Pacific's Sex and Gender class assisted us with participation at Earth Day and the Asparagus Festival.

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS

Each year each League is assigned interviews of our local State legislators. It is one way to promote League legislative positions. It also gives LWVC and our local League some insight into the issues and priorities of our State officials. This year, our League was asked to interview newly elected Assemblymembers Alyson Huber and Bill Berryhill. The perspective of two new legislators from opposite parties in a very trying year made for compelling interviews.



League Members in the News

Women of Achievement

Two League members were recognized by the San Joaquin County Commission on the Status of Women in February as Women of Achievement. Vickie Markarian (left) was recognized for her community service, particularly as the linchpin of voter services for our League. Daphne Shaw was recognized in the area of Health Care, particularly for her role as mental health advocate.



Athena Award Winner



Mary Bava was recognized by the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce for her professional accomplishments, her community service and her role in helping other women in the community attain success.

Woman of Distinction



Susan Loyko was selected as one of five Women of Distinction by the University of the Pacific in honor of her many contributions to the community.

Congratulations, ladies! You have done us all proud!