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# The Voter

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## County groundwater is topic of League forum

*By Susan Mora Loyko*

During a March 21<sup>st</sup> forum, “Groundwater in San Joaquin County: Challenges to Managing a Vital and Threatened Resources,” panelists from local water agencies shared their stories about drought in San Joaquin County. All agreed matters are going from bad to worse due to groundwater overdraft. And even more troubling, the State has done little to help but rather is actively working against the County in finding solutions.

Some 75 attendees in the near-capacity meeting room at O’Connor Woods listened intently as the County water authorities shared their respective drought stories and the loss of groundwater.



*Former San Joaquin County Supervisor Ken Vogel*

Brandon Nakagawa, Water Resources Manager for San Joaquin County Public Works, said the “precipitous decline” of groundwater began in the 1940s at the rate of 1 ½ feet each year. He explained groundwater overdraft in some parts of the San Joaquin Valley has led to significant land subsidence resulting in decreased water storage capacity, increased salinity, and depletion of streams that has impacted fish and wildlife.

Although the County officially began measuring groundwater levels in 1972, it wasn’t until the late 1980s that County water agencies began working together to increase the use of surface water to reduce groundwater declines, he said. That partnership resulted in the formation of the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Basin Authority to develop comprehensive legislation to manage sustainable levels: create high/medium priority basins, form a groundwater storage agency, develop storage plans, and collaborate on grant funding for water infrastructure projects.

Mr. Nakagawa said the Authority has been monitoring the State Legislature as members deal with the Sustainable Groundwater Act that he likened to "watching sausage being made." Comprehensive legislation is needed, he said.

Former County Supervisor Ken Vogel said the State has imposed a 2017 timeline on County agencies to draft their groundwater plans, but guidelines won't be available until 2016 "which doesn't give them much time to develop their plans." The Board of Supervisors has consistently opposed the State's groundwater legislation, which he sees as an attempt to make it part of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan that would give the State more authority and flexibility to transfer water throughout the State.

Tom Flynn, retired San Joaquin County Public Work Director and current Board Member of the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District (NSJWCD) that covers 150,000 acres, said his agency has antiquated infrastructure and lacks surface water. He said Prop 218 (taxes subject to voter approval) has hampered increased revenue for the district. Farmers understand the water problem and the cost of recharging the groundwater to make them successful. Government can't solve the problem alone.

Scot Moody, General Manager of the Stockton East Water District (SEWD), said New Hogan Dam has a capacity for 325,000 acre-feet. This year it has 15,000 acre feet while New Melones reservoir has no water. In a "normal year" SEWD delivers 50,000 acre-feet to Stockton and Cal Water for their residential and commercial customers. This year only be 20,000 acre-feet will be provided. Agriculture customers will only get 12.65 acre-feet instead of the usual 31,000 acre-feet of water and there will be nothing for groundwater recharge.

Like his fellow-panelists, Mr. Moody agreed that extensive coordination is needed between all water purveyors to develop a sustainability plan and protect property owners.



*Jeff Shields, General Manager, South San Joaquin Irrigation District*

Jeff Shields, General Manager of the South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID) that provides water to Ripon, Tracy and Manteca, said groundwater is still being used to meet customer needs. He said last year SSJID had a 20% reduction in water availability and faces another 20% reduction this year.

Mr. Shields said that last year, nine groundwater water bills went before the Legislature, but the Governor signed the only one that did not have groundwater recharge as a beneficial use. He warned that for the next five years "we will be facing the State's Plan and Mother Earth's wrath. Pray for rain."

Bob Granberg, Assistant Director of the City of Stockton Municipal Utilities District, which serves the northern and southern areas of the City, explained that the State's water code allows

Stockton to take out what it puts into the San Joaquin River. Since its wastewater facility discharges into the San Joaquin River, the recently constructed Delta Water Supply Project (DWSP) is allowed to take a similar amount out of the river. As a result, he said, from 1977-2012, the City used 60% surface water, 40% groundwater. In 2012, when the DWSP was completed, the City used 90% surface water and 10% groundwater.

He said the City will continue working with other water agencies to make large investments in conjunctive use projects (coordinated use of surface water and groundwater).

## President's Message

This year started off with our annual planning meeting, kindly hosted by Colleen Foster and Donna Brown. We agreed on four major areas to study, research, explore and present as educational programs.

In February we were proud and pleased to see our own Jane Wagner-Tyack receive a Susan B. Anthony Woman of Achievement Award.

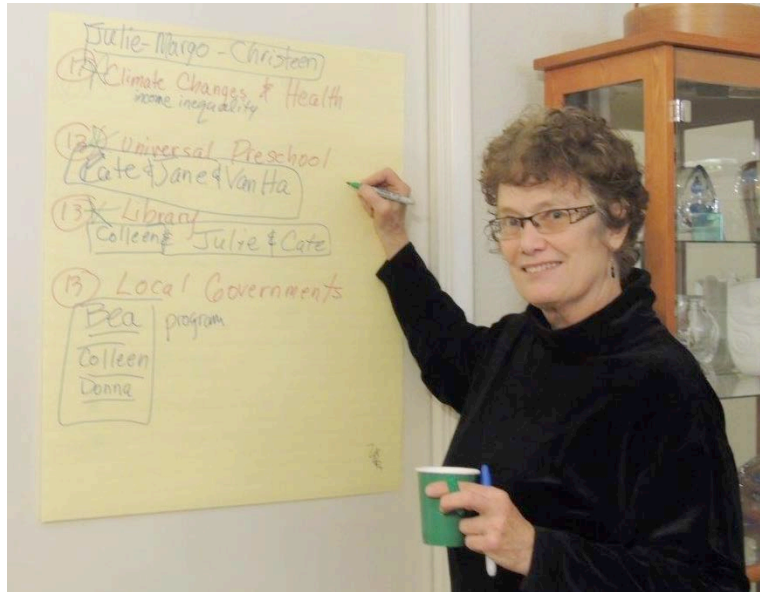
Although we were unable to schedule our choice of speakers for a presentation on fracking this spring, we still hope to present that program in the coming months.

Our Groundwater program in March was very well attended. All present learned much about the recent legislation and its impacts in our county, although we were barely able to scratch the surface of this complex issue. In April we hosted a program covering both Civil and Criminal Grand Juries, educating ourselves and the public about the important work of these civic obligations (and opportunities).

As your president, I have learned much in the process of setting up and hearing excellent speakers on timely topics. I've learned even more from very knowledgeable fellow board members. It has been a very busy and exciting year for me and all of the board. We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting in the Stockton Hilton on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.

Please feel free to contact me at my email address ([kschick2@gmail.com](mailto:kschick2@gmail.com)) or my home phone number (209-464-8304) if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,  
Kathy Schick



*President Kathy Schick at the January Program Planning Meeting*

## Program Planning meeting identifies topics for focus

On January 24, 13 LWVSJC members met at the home of Colleen Foster and Donna Brown to decide what issues the League will focus on for education and advocacy during the coming fiscal year.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Bea Lingenfelter on a six-page handout that she and Susan Loyko have developed: *LWVSJC Membership Recruitment & Community Outreach*. The packet is designed for members to use for brief presentations to organization or in other public venues, informing community members about the League mission and encouraging people to become members.

The plan is to send members out with this packet of talking points, league membership brochures, voter registration forms, and Smart Voter bookmarks. The League's community outreach will be greatly increased if members take the presentation to one or two groups in the coming year.



*Kathy Casenave, Julie Schardt, and Patricia Voss participate in program planning brainstorming activity.*

It was suggested that this membership outreach effort include a Power Point presentation and/or a Youtube video to be placed on our LWVSJC website. There was also discussion of offering students memberships for less than the \$30 current cost.

Next, President Kathy Schick led a discussion of upcoming program and study ideas for the 2015-2016 year.

All ideas were recorded on chart paper; then attendees voted with colored dot stickers to arrive at the tops four vote-getters. These are

- the impact of climate change on health and income inequality;
- early childhood education, including universal preschool, mandatory kindergarten, and improved access to daycare;
- the San Joaquin County library system, including grant support; and
- local government issues, including campaigns, the influence of money, district configurations, term lengths, and overall stability.

The San Joaquin County League will again be involved with water education and advocacy at the state level through the participation of Jane Wagner-Tyack on the LWVC Water Committee; and Cate White will be participating in LWVC work on early childhood education.

Members have an ongoing interest in fracking, and we continue to look for a way to educate ourselves and the community about this important issue.

Members interested in working on any of these topics should contact President Kathy Schick, [kschick2@gmail.com](mailto:kschick2@gmail.com).

## Civil Grand Jury a force for improvement

Meeting at the Mexican heritage Center in Stockton on April 11, members learned about “Agents of Change in Our Community: the Civil Grand Jury” in presentations by Kenneth Buck and Caitlin Casey of the San Joaquin County Chapter of the California Grand Jurors Association.

Ms. Casey, a San Joaquin County deputy district attorney, began the presentation with an overview of the activities of a criminal grand jury, the kind of grand jury most citizens are more familiar with. Members of a criminal grand jury are summoned like other jurors but meet for a limited period of time to decide whether the district attorney has enough evidence to indict someone accused of a crime. This process is faster and more efficient than going through a regular court procedure.

By contrast, a civil grand jury is impaneled for a year for the purpose of investigating government agencies in the county. Mr. Buck explained how these 19 citizens function as a “watchdog” on city and county departments, including school districts and special districts like fire and reclamation districts. Issues are brought to the civil grand jury in a variety of ways, including by citizen complaints, and the grand jury members decide by consensus what issues they will investigate.

The jury members themselves conduct research and interviews, validate information received, and write a final report of facts, findings, and recommendations. Agencies are required to respond to a grand jury report within 90 days. The reports are released to the media, so although agencies are not legally required to make any changes in response to grand jury recommendations, they are under public pressure to do so.

Civil grand jurors may volunteer to serve, be nominated, or be summoned by the court. They serve with only minimal compensation, but they play an important role in advancing the cause of good government.



*Kenneth Buck and Caitlin Casey spoke about civil and criminal grand juries.*

## County Libraries the focus of Annual Meeting speakers

The League of Women Voters believes that libraries provide an essential service in our democratic society, and they play a role in a community's economic success and the safety and well-being of its residents. In view of our concerns about the San Joaquin County library system, we are looking forward to hearing at our Annual Meeting from two speakers on the subject.

Suzy Daveluy is the newly appointed Deputy of Community Services for the Library (called "City Librarian"). She will talk about her vision for the Library now that Stockton is emerging from bankruptcy. Dr. Mas'ood Cajee, local dentist and chair of Strong Libraries = Strong Communities, will speak on the group's advocacy on behalf of the Library and how the community can get involved in strengthening the library after years of fiscal difficulties.

Please see the reservation form on the next page for information about the Annual Meeting.

## Toastmasters offers public speaking opportunities

As League of Women Voters members, we are often asked to speak, conduct meetings, or discuss our agenda with the public. If you would like to

- become a better speaker and presenter
- communicate with confidence
- develop your leadership skills
- listen effectively

all in a supportive, self-paced, fun atmosphere, Toastmasters can help.

A local Toastmasters group meets at Carrows on March Lane in Stockton on Wednesdays from 12:05 to 1 p.m. For more information about becoming involved, contact Dee Matteucci, [fmatooch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fmatooch@sbcglobal.net) or (209) 477-3628.

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### LWVSJC Board of Directors for 2014-2015

#### Officers

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Kathy Casenave,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Colleen Foster, Secretary  
Jane Wagner-Tyack,  
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Bea Lingenfelter  
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Patricia Voss  
Cate White

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Christeen Ferree  
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**Voter photos** courtesy of  
Donna Brown and Jim  
Schardt

#### Voter Editor

Could be you! You know who you are, person with newsletter experience. Very few and flexible hours, lots of creative latitude. Contact [JaneTyack@mac.com](mailto:JaneTyack@mac.com)

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

Speakers:

**Mas’ood Cajee**

*Chair of Strong Libraries=Strong Communities*

**Suzy Daveluy**

*Newly-Appointed “City Librarian”*

**“Strengthening Our County Library System”**

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Stockton Hilton, 2323 Grand Canal Boulevard, Stockton, CA 95207

Gathering and no-host bar 5:30; Dinner 6:00; Program 6:30;  
Business meeting to follow

Cost: \$40

**Reservations required.**

**Reservation and meal selection deadline: May 20, 2015**

To make your reservations, send a check made out to **LWVSCJ** along with your meal selection form to LWVSCJ, P. O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204. With questions or to cancel a reservation, contact Diane Park, 477-7193, [kodiak.park9@gmail.com](mailto:kodiak.park9@gmail.com). Cancellations accepted through May 20, 2015. Payments cannot be refunded for cancellations after that date.

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**RESERVATION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ to cover \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) at \$40 each.

Please specify a meal choice for each person attending.

Entrée choice: Lemon Grass Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ New York Steak \_\_\_\_\_ Tuscan Pasta \_\_\_\_\_

Dinners served with salad, bread and butter, seasonal vegetables, white cheddar whipped potatoes, and hot or iced tea. Desert is pound cake with seasonal berries and whipped cream.

## The LWVUS seeks consensus on money in politics

*By George Schuhmann*

In June 2014 the LWVUS Convention adopted a program to review and update the League's position on campaign finance (1974, updated in 1982) in light of the changes since the Watergate reforms. That position addresses

- ensuring the public's right to know,
- combating corruption and undue influence,
- enabling candidates to compete equitably for public office, and
- allowing maximum citizen participation in the political process.

The LWVUS Board has formed the Money in Politics (MIP) Committee to enhance understanding of the new schemes and structures used to influence elections, erode protections against corruption in our political process, and review possible responses.

In particular, the MIP Committee is researching the relationship of money to freedom of speech under the First Amendment—an area of Supreme Court jurisprudence that changed with the Citizens United decision in 2010. That decision extended the view of free speech to allow unlimited independent spending by Super PACs, corporations and unions and radically transformed the election landscape.

To update the League position to include the role of money as speech requires member understanding and agreement on these issues. The MIP Committee has thus been tasked with preparing educational materials for member study and consensus building. The timeline for this process involves Committee work through the spring and summer, review by the LWVUS board and staff, the formation of local study committees in the fall with consensus meetings in early 2016 so that the response can lead to a recommendation of an updated position on campaign finance at the June 2016 Convention.

Your support for this process is needed for California to have its voice heard.

An article of interest on this subject: <http://alumni.berkeley.edu/california-magazine/just-in/2015-02-23/political-payoffs-software-and-sweat-maplight-connects>

*George Schuhmann is a retired attorney serving on the LWVUS MIP Committee. He also serves as Deputy Chair of the LWV Louisville Campaign Finance Reform Committee.*

***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.***