



The Voter

LWVC Convention Plans for Year Ahead

LWVSJC THANKS
All those League members who contributed to our "Share the Change" fundraiser at the Annual Meeting. We raised \$120!

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Catch the Wave to the Future, the LWVC 2009 Convention in Long Beach May 15-17, was energizing and memorable for Ann Pentecost and me as we represented LWVSJC. Those who have attended League conventions in the past know how packed the days are with interesting people, information, and experiences.

President Janis Hirohama reported on the \$550,000 grant LWVC received from the James Irvine Foundation for membership and communications. This was a welcome infusion because, as Executive Director Jill Kaiser Newcom reported, for every dollar of per member payment (PMP) that the State League receives, they have to spend five dollars on administrative and support activities.

With the financial support from the James Irvine Foundation, LWVC assessed the organization's strengths and weaknesses and decided to more tightly focus the League's activities in areas with the greatest potential for visibility and impact on the League's mission: Democracy, Voting, and Civic Engagement. This decision

led to a restructuring of the Board and to changes in the League's business model.

Many delegates expressed concern about the shift in emphasis away from Education and Advocacy. Motions were introduced to add state and local finances, water, and health care as issues for education and advocacy, because these were the issues in which the largest number of local leagues had expressed interest. Those motions were defeated.

Also defeated was the motion to consider a prison study, which Ann and I supported at the direction of the LWVJC board.

Delegates adopted two issues for education and advocacy: Redistricting Implementation and Government Reform. LWVC devoted substantial time and resources last year to helping to pass Proposition 11, redistricting reform, and the convention agreed that redistricting is "unfinished business" until a redistricting commission is actually formed and put in place. Ann Pentecost will be working on redistricting.

tricting.

Delegates also agreed that Government Reform—in areas such as state and local finances, the initiative and referendum process, and campaign financing—is necessary before the State can effectively address other issues.

With regard to all those other issues about which individual members feel so passionate and to which they are committed, the message from LWVC was that it will provide support for local leagues in their efforts to educate and advocate. To learn what that means for one of our LWVSJC interests—water—see the accompanying article.

I attended workshops on "The Welcoming League: Membership Growth and Retention"; Communications: Give Them What They Want"; and "The State Legislative Process and Potential Reforms." I look forward to sharing what I learned with LWVSJC members who are interested in membership, communications, and legislation.

- Jane Wagner-Tyack

Incoming President Outlines Year Ahead



Jane Wagner-Tyack, began her remarks to members at the Annual Meeting with a story about a neighbor who moved into a house and immediately cut down a tree that was beloved by the other neighbors. Come summer, the neighbor realized he had lost shade for his home—and the sympathy of surrounding residents. This story, she said, taught her not to make decisions until you knew the history of a situation and the ramifications of your actions—and this is how she would approach her year as League president. “There will be no big, immediate changes” for our League, she said. “We’ll consider changes after deliberation and we’d like member input.”

Jane suggested that, since the upcoming year will not revolve around elections that the year might focus on education

and advocacy regarding water issues in San Joaquin County. “There are many aspects of water—a declining water table, competition for surface water, the need for water conservation, relationship of water to land us—that will affect us all and this is an area that might provide opportunities for more member involvement.” Health care reform, state budget issues and local government reform will also continue to be issues of concern.

Jane asked for input on these and other issues facing the League—from membership and communication (“Anyone want to be the new Voter editor?”) to programs of interest to members—as possible programs. In particular, she will be looking for ways to involve younger people who got a taste of civic involvement in the presidential election. “We all need to be looking for issues and activities that will engage new members.”

LWVC urges National League to Support Single Payer Health Care Plan

At the Convention in Long Beach, the California League adopted the following resolution to urge the National League in the direction of single payer system to achieve universal health care.:



ual insurance premiums; and

Whereas, A SINGLE PAYER health care plan can best fulfill these criteria; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the LWVC ask the LWVUS to actively support the principle of SINGLE PAYER NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE by

R-1-2009: Single Payer Health Care Plan RESOLUTIONS 2007

Adopted by Delegates to the LWVC Convention, May 17, 2009

Whereas, The LWVUS position on health care calls for A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM which is universal, comprehensive, equitable, and affordable both to individuals and to the nation;

Whereas, The LWVUS position (adopted in 1993) supports A NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN financed through general taxes in place of individ-

* vigorously advocating that a single payer legislative proposal be included in deliberation of health care reform by Congress and the Administration and

* insisting that side-by-side comparative analyses of single payer proposals with other proposals for health care reform be part of these deliberations.

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Helen Pearson Award Committee

Vickie Markarian, Chair; Sylvia Kothe, Cate White

Annual Meeting Highlights



A record number of members—over 30, which is nearly a third of our membership—attended our Annual Meeting on June 18th at Bud's

Seafood Restaurant. Several new members were there, so it was a chance to get to meet them. From the decibel level, it appeared everyone was enjoying the chance to visit.

The group also tackled some important business.

Budget Passed

Passing the budget is one of the most important decisions made by members at the Annual Meeting. The budget passed for next year was not too much different from the one guiding the League this year. It reflected our League's declining membership: fewer members, less PMP (per member payments) to the state and national Leagues. The \$10,500. budget was passed unanimously.

Dues Increase

Last year the membership voted to increase dues from \$50/year to \$60/

year in order to keep pace with the Per Member Payment increases by LWVC and LWVUS. In an oversight, the dues increase passed last year covered only individual memberships. In order to treat all members equally, the Board recommended that household dues also be increased from \$75/year to \$85/year. This proposal passed unanimously.

New Officers/Boardmembers Elected

League Co-President Peaches Ehrich



(right) passed the gavel to incoming President Jane Wagner-Tyack after the slate of officers was voted on by the members who attended the Annual Meeting.

Other officers and directors were also elected:

- Bea Lingenfelter, 2nd VP
- Ava Langston-Kenny—who agreed to a nomination from the floor to be secretary. Ava had agreed to be on the Board but graciously accepted the secretary position which had not been filled by the time of the meeting.
- Boardmembers Lauren Ah Tye and Lydia Tinder were also elected.
- Cate White will finish out her term of office as 1st VP. She was elected last

year as 2nd VP.

- Ann Pentecost will continue to serve as Treasurer and Katrina Jaggears, Daphne Shaw, Pat Thomas and Esther Vasquez will continue on the Board of Directors.

Presidential Remarks

Please see Page 2 for a summary of Jane's comments.

Helen Pearson Award Recognized Dale Stocking

Dale was recognized as this year's Helen Pearson award recipient for his work in getting our Voter online, a move that simultaneously saved our League money while making our publication more available. Dale

was also recognized for his tireless efforts with the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton, a group opposed to water privatization. LWVUSJC was a principle partner in CCCoS efforts.

Congratulations, Dale!



LWVC to Focus on Redistricting

The League's State Convention in Long Beach from May 15 to 17 was somewhat tame after the Convention in 2007 and the National Convention last year. However, it was packed with useful programs and interesting caucuses and meetings.

Redistricting is one of the priorities for the next two years. The Redistricting Caucus was hosted by Chris Carson, LWVC Government Director, who was one of the leaders for the League in getting Prop 11 on the ballot and passed. She reported on the process which under the direction of the State Auditor's

Office will create the new Redistricting Commission.

Along with Trudy Schafer, LWVC Senior Director for Program, Chris is now the League's representatives in a loose coalition of groups (including a couple of groups who opposed Prop 11) working with the State Auditor to design the application process for the Commission. Assuming things go smoothly, the regulations for the appointment of the Commission will be posted on the Auditor's website by this November and the applications will be ready on the website www.bsa.ca.gov by January 2010.

Local Leagues are being asked to help the Auditor identify community groups and provide contact information. It will also be important for the local Leagues to identify and talk with local individuals who could qualify for the Commission and urge them to apply. This is an opportunity for the League to outreach and build partnerships.

I have further information for anyone interested.

- Ann Pentecost

WATER ISSUES SURFACE AT LWVC CONVENTION

Among issues mentioned by Leagues statewide as warranting education and advocacy during the coming two years, Water was second, after State and Local Finances (i.e. budgets) and before Health Care. Clearly, LWVSJC was not the only League that thought the convention “Wave to the Future” should have carried on it a discussion of California’s water situation. But no workshops or caucuses on natural resources were scheduled.

Trying to Talk about Water

LWVC sponsors a discussion group on Sustainability, [lwvcsustain](#), that is moderated by our own Diane Park. About a month before the convention, someone in the discussion group suggested a natural resources get-together Thursday evening before the opening Plenary Session but that timing didn’t work out. At Diane’s suggestion, I contacted LWVC about scheduling a caucus on “Natural Resources Sustainability: Update on Energy and Water.” First Vice President Trudy Jarratt found space for this caucus (at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning!) and put an announcement and description on the convention blog. State Natural Resources Director Charlotte Fox supported our efforts to promote the caucus.

I went down to Long Beach a bit overwhelmed at the prospect of co-moderating a caucus at my very first convention. Among other concerns was what kind of reception to expect



to my comments about over-allocation and mismanagement of water in California and the effects of that on San Joaquin County and the Delta.

A Lucky Accident

Then a lucky accident put Ann and me at a table with Butte County delegates on the convention floor. One of those delegates, Barbara Hennigan, is at least as passionate as I about water and, in addition, has lots of experience with the protocols of a LWVC convention. Together, the two counties mapped out a strategy.

Resolution Rejected

The caucus showed support for a wider discussion of water issues. So Barbara and I put together a Will of the Convention Resolution regarding water and took it to the Resolutions Committee. The committee asked us to withdraw it but proposed instead that we establish an online discussion group that would allow us to explore regional and inter-regional water issues. They also invited us to present our concerns as Advice to the LWVC Board at the end of the last Plenary Session.

Discussion Group Formed

LWVC Communications Director Jennifer Waggoner helped me set up a discussion group, [lwvcwater](#), that I will moderate. I will be relying heavily on Diane Park in figuring out how to do that.

Advice to the LWVC Board

Advice to the Board is sort of a parting shot and isn’t binding on anyone. On the other hand, our discussion with the Resolutions Committee could be the opening salvo of an effort to reconsider LWVC Action Policies and Positions with respect

to water, which were last updated 30 years ago.

Summary

Different hydrologic regions of California have very different water sources, uses, and vulnerabilities. Proposals to meet one region’s needs may be devastating to another hydrologic area. We must have an internal conversation about these differences. We asked the Board to consider the situation of California’s different hydrologic regions when taking legislative action, subject to existing LWVC Action Policies and Positions. With respect to communication with local leagues, we ask the Board to support and encourage a statewide conversation about water on the discussion group [lwvcwater@yahoo.com](#).

Local Action Opportunities

I want to encourage any of our members with a special interest in water to get in touch with Environmental Chair Esther Vasquez. The Environmental Committee can use your help!

Also, if you are interested in analyzing legislation with an eye to LWVC Action Policies and Positions, please get in touch with me. As we found when LWVC agreed last year to send a letter to the Resources Agency related to planning for the Delta, the State League is willing to help us if we do the background work.

- Jane Wagner-Tyack

Cost of Health Insurance Should Spur interest in Single Payer Proposals—but that’s not happening

Single payer proponents are being excluded from much of the national discussion on health care reform but “Costs for program administration and the net cost of private health insurance were about 7 percent of total health spending in the U.S. in 2006 and grew 8.8 percent, a marked increase over the 3.6 percent rise in 2005”. Hmmm.

From “A Reporter’s Toolkit: Health Care Costs” (provided by LWVUS)

Convention Delegates Decry Loss of Signature Pros and Cons

Convention delegates expressed their “shock and dismay” about the discontinuation of paper Pros and Cons by LWVC, a move taken to save money but seen as a loss of an essential element in the League’s voter service program. Delegates passed the following resolution strongly urging LWVC Board to reinstate the publication that so many Leagues—and voters—rely on.

Adopted by Delegates to the LWVC Convention, May 17, 2009

Whereas, Most of the 65 local Leagues in California have built their community outreach efforts and reputations around Voter Education and election-time activities;

Whereas, The published Pros and Cons of the statewide bal-



lot measures have long been the foundation and mainstay for our education and outreach activities to hundreds of community organizations throughout the state;

Whereas, The printed Pros and Cons product has matured into an attractive, user-friendly and highly-regarded institutional publication with impressive name-brand recognition, and is also a modest revenue-generating project for the State League; and

Whereas, The abrupt and conspicuous absence of the published Pros & Cons has been met with shock and dismay by a great many local Leagues, as

well as the many community organizations that invite us to present and deliver the so-called “Pros & Cons” of the statewide ballot measures on behalf of the highly-respected League of Women Voters of California; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates of this 2009 LWVC Convention do hereby respectfully and urgently request that the Board of LWVCEF consider reinstating the publication of Pros and Cons of the statewide ballot measures for use by our local Leagues in our very important Voter Service and Civic Engagement activities for future statewide elections.

LWVCEF Honored for Voter Education and Outreach

The League of Women Voters of California was recently honored with the Medallion Award from the National Association of Secretaries of State. The award recognizes outstanding efforts in nonpartisan voter education and outreach for the 2008 election year.



California Secretary of State Debra Bowen presented the award on May 16 during the state League’s biennial convention in Long Beach, California.

“The League’s longstanding leadership in strengthening democracy makes it deserving of this NASS Medallion

honor,” said Bowen, California’s chief elections officer. “Thanks to the dedicated work of organizations like the LWVC, California saw record turnout in last year’s presidential election!”

LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said, “We are honored to receive this award. It is a tribute to our high quality, user-friendly voter education services, including Smart-Voter.org and the Easy Voter Guide, and to the many League volunteers who make our work possible.”

The NASS Medallion Program honors individuals, groups, or organizations with an established record of promoting the goals of NASS in one or more of the following areas:

- Elections, with special emphasis on voter education and participation
- Civic education, including the teaching, promotion, and study of this subject
- Service to state government—specifically, as it relates to the duties of the office of the secretary of state.



Focus on LWVUS

Open Letter to the Editor on the Freedom on Information Act

Dear Editor,



This Independence Day marks 43 years since the landmark Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was signed into law – yet Americans still believe that our government is secretive.

FOIA established our right to access government records and to know what our government is doing – both its successes and failures. Exercising our right to know allows us to contribute to our government and hold government accountable. From food and transportation safety to the use and disposal of chemicals, FOIA has enabled the public to not only ensure the health of our democracy, but also ensure our own well-being.

FOIA (and related state and local laws) are only as good as we demand that they be. For decades, members of the League of Women Voters have acted as government watchdogs at the federal, state and local levels -- observing government meetings, conducting document audits and empowering citizens, but more work needs to be done.

The key to a healthy, open government is public participation. On his first day in office, President Obama called for making the federal government more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. The White House is currently soliciting the public for such recommendations. This FOIA anniversary, exercise your right to know by seeking records, attending a government meeting, or adding your voice to the White House discussion.

League Urged House to Pass Climate Change Legislation

The League and coalition partners urged members of the House of Representatives to vote YES on America's Clean Energy and Security Act to address climate change. A letter to Congress said, in part:

“ACES will help build America’s clean energy economy and launch the United States’ first national plan of action to address the growing threat of climate change. ACES offers our country the most important opportunity in generations to jumpstart our economy, create millions of new, well-paying jobs, and set the stage for America to compete and prosper in a 21st century economy.”

We believe this is one of the most important votes of our time. There are rare moments in American history when the urgency to act is clear, the stakes are high, the costs of inaction are untenable, and the need for courageous leadership is paramount. Now is one of those moments. An opportunity like this may not come again for many years.”

While the League was urging passage of this landmark legislation, it also put out a report on climate changes, specifically on the Midwest.

In a paper titled **GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACTS IN THE MIDWEST**, (June 23, 2009), Eleanor Revelle of the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force warned of serious impacts facing the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin):

- **Increasingly frequent and more intense heat waves will adversely affect human health.** More cases of heat-related illness and



mortality can be expected particularly among the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Air quality is likely to worsen, exacerbating asthma and other respiratory diseases. Poor air quality that threatens public health.



- **More frequent heavy rainstorms will cause flooding and trigger sewage overflows.**

Increases in heat, insect pests, and weather extremes will pose challenges for agriculture.

- **Great Lakes water levels will decline**, increasing shipping costs and dredging requirements. Warming temperatures are projected to further reduce ice cover on the Great Lakes. This in turn will mean increased lake evaporation and a likely decline in lake water levels. Although reduced ice coverage would open up more of the Great Lakes to commercial shipping and recreational boating, lower lake levels could bring adverse economic impacts. Ships would not be able to carry as much cargo, and extensive dredging would be needed to keep shipping channels open and harbors functioning.

Changing climate conditions will threaten many native species. Habitats of many tree species will shift northward, and more heat and drought-tolerant species will become more abundant. Corresponding changes in animal and insect communities can also be expected as the timing and quality of their food resources change.

League of Women Voters Expresses Disappointment in Proposition 8 Decision

Following the ruling by the California Supreme Court on the challenge to Proposition 8, which the League opposed, the state League issued the following press release:

The California Supreme Court issued its decision today upholding the constitutionality of Proposition 8. The measure, passed by the voters on November 4, 2008, amended the California Constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.

In today's 6-1 ruling, the Supreme Court rejected a constitutional challenge to Proposition 8 brought by the City and County of San Francisco, the County of Santa Clara, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and numerous individual Californians. The LWVC, represented pro bono by the law firm of

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, had filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in January supporting the legal challenge against the measure.

The Court held that Proposition 8 is a valid amendment to the California Constitution and that it is not an invalid constitutional revision carried out through the initiative process. It also found that the measure does not entirely repeal or abrogate the constitutional right to privacy and due process of same-sex couples. The Court did, however, unanimously hold that Proposition 8 applies prospectively only, and therefore does not affect the continued validity of same-sex marriages that took place before the November 5, 2008 effective date of the initiative.

LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said: "We are deeply disappointed by the Court's decision. The League opposed

Proposition 8 because we believe in protecting individual rights and that no person or group should suffer legal discrimination." She noted, "We are concerned that the ruling raises the possibility of future ballot measures being used to change or alter the state Constitution in order to single out other groups for discriminatory treatment." Hirohama added, "However, we are relieved that the Court agreed with the retroactivity argument raised by the League and others in finding that the marital status of same-sex couples who married before November 5, 2008 should be recognized and preserved."

The LWVC has long opposed measures that threaten individual rights, including Proposition 22 in 2000, which also limited marriage as only being between a man and a woman.

A Good Time to RENEW—Now!

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Dues are not tax deductible.

Dues year is July 1—June 30

I want renew my membership in the League of Women Voters:

Dues: _____\$60 [individual] _____\$75 [sustaining] _____\$85 [household] _____\$30 [student]

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Email _____

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

_____ I would like to make a tax deductible donation to the League Education Fund.
Following LWVC guidelines, if you wish to make a contribution to the Ed Fund, please submit a separate check to LWVSJC Ed Fund and send it to the above address. This will help to insure the Ed Fund status as a charitable and tax deductible organization. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. ***Thank you for your generosity.***



League of Women Voters
of San Joaquin County
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www.sjc.lwvnet.org



Democracy is not a spectator sport!

*Plan to participate
in League activities
this coming year!*

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