



# The Voter

LWVSJC  
Board of Directors for 2009-  
2010

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**Announcement:**

**Someone left a black knit glove at Dee Matteucci's after the Holiday Party. Contact Dee to reclaim it.**

## Program on Prison Facilities Scheduled for January

On Saturday morning January 30<sup>th</sup>, LWVSJC will host a program at Valley Brew in Stockton on "New State Prison Facilities: Background and Prospects."

Scheduled to speak is Stockton Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer Doug Wilhoit, who will provide an update on the state prison facilities plan for San Joaquin County and on legal efforts by the Chamber, the County, and the City of Stockton.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation will send Scott Kernan, Undersecretary of Operations, to the event. We also expect a representative of the court-appointed Receiver overseeing inmate health care.

You won't want to miss this opportunity to hear various perspectives on this extremely controversial subject. Join us at Valley Brew, 157 West Adams Street off North Pacific Avenue (the Miracle Mile) starting at 9:00 a.m. for a no-host breakfast. The program itself is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

**Please see page 7 for details of the Delta Water Forum scheduled for January 23 in Antioch.**

*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.*

## President's Message

### Continuing a 90-Year Tradition of Education and Advocacy

This coming February, the League of Women Voters of the United States will celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. LWV has fought since 1920 to improve our system of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy.

On both candidates and issues, the league is committed to providing citizens with the unbiased information they need to make their own decisions in the voting booth. Although the League never supports or opposes political candidates, it does in some cases support or oppose programs, legislation, or initiatives. The League arrives at positions on issues through a consensus process after careful study, then uses those consensus positions where appropriate for advocacy on issues the membership identifies as especially important.

This issue of *The Voter* includes a brief update on current advocacy issues at the national League level. At the state level, the League is focusing its resources on Redistricting and Government Reform. LWVC was one of the leaders in last year's fight for redistricting reform and is now involved in the process of forming a Citizens' Redistricting Commission. Please visit the LWVC website, [ca.lwv.org](http://ca.lwv.org), if you are interested in serving on this commission or know someone who would be a good commissioner.

LWVC is supporting the California Fair Elections Act on the June ballot. An article in this issue provides details. LWVC is also looking at some of the current proposals for government reform, including constitutional reform. This past November, LWVC President Janis Hirohama testified at a hearing in Oakland on reform of the initiative process.

With regard to health care, LWVC is part of a state strategy group working to pass single payer health insurance in California. The League is supporting SB 810 (Leno), the California Universal Health Care Act, an earlier version of which was passed by the legislature then vetoed by the Governor in 2008.

Here in San Joaquin County, the League is following the national and State healthcare debates and keeping an eye on local land use issues (see the upcoming January 30 program on the new prison facilities coming to San Joaquin County). LWVSJC was a leader in the successful battle to defeat water privatization in Stockton, and water issues are once again occupying our attention, as a glance through this issue of *The Voter* will show.

For 90 years, the League of Women Voters has held the public trust by respectfully bringing elected leaders and the public together through non-partisan, civil means and through thoughtfully advancing solutions. We welcome anyone (without regard to gender!) who wishes to work with us in that effort.

Happy New Year to all!

Jane

## Ensuring Fair Elections

Each year, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. reevaluates its advocacy priorities. Current LWV Advocacy priorities include Health Care Reform, Global Climate Change, Washington DC Voting Rights, and Election Administration. Additional issues LWVUS is watching include Campaign Finance Reform, CEDAW (The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), Civil Liberties, Ethics and Lobbying Reform, and Redistricting Reform.

At the urging of LWV Boulder County, Colorado, the San Joaquin County board has formally requested that the LWVUS Board select the **Fair Elections Now Acts** as a top advocacy priority at their January meeting. As LWV Boulder County President Rose Mary Highman notes, “Providing public funding for the campaigns of U.S. Senators and Representatives will mean that Congress works for the people of this country rather than for wealthy special interests.”



“The Fair Elections Now (FEN) Acts will . . . provide the candidates who agree to the spending limits with vouchers for free television time saving a huge expense. The citizens will know that these candidates will not be beholden to lobbyists for their re-election. Their constituents will have confidence that the candidate will represent the interests of their district or state and not that of the special interests.”

Says Highman, “Both the Senate and the House versions of the FEN Act have funding sources so that it would not increase the national debt. One of them is paid for with proceeds from the sale of analog band widths. The other is funded by a 0.05% tax on large contracts with the US Government such as those with Halliburton.”

The FEN Acts have the same objective as the **California Fair Elections Act** that Californians will vote on this coming June. The League of Women Voters of California, the California Clean Money Campaign, California Common Cause, and the California Nurses Association have come together along with a broad coalition of over 200 endorsing organizations, elected officials, and other leaders to pass this election financing reform.

The California Fair Elections Act was placed on the ballot when the legislature passed and the Governor signed Senator Loni Hancock's AB 583. The Act will implement a pilot project that will provide voluntary public financing for qualified candidates running for Secretary of State in 2014 and 2018:

- It imposes strict reporting requirements and prohibitions on campaign spending for participating candidates. Violators would face fines, possible jail time, and prohibitions from running for office in the future.
- It ensures that only candidates showing broad support and agreeing to strict spending limits would receive funding to run competitive campaigns.

- Participating candidates are prohibited from raising or spending money beyond the public funding, and are banned from raising money from lobbyists, their clients, or anybody else.
- Funding is provided primarily by registration fees on lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers, with no taxpayer dollars going to candidates. (Currently, lobbyists pay only \$12.50 per year in California, one of the lowest rates in the country.)

Passage of these fair elections acts at the national and State levels will go a long way toward returning to voters their proper influence on government.

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## Planning for Flood Management

*By Jane Wagner-Tyack*

Recent legislation directs the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to prepare a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) by January 1, 2012. Part of the Flood Management Planning Program of FloodSAFE California, the (CVFPP) will

- Promote understanding of existing conditions, likely future challenges, problems and opportunities, and goals and objectives of integrated flood management in the Central Valley from various perspectives (including state, federal, tribal, local, regional, and other interests).
- Develop a broadly supported visions for improving integrated flood management in the Central Valley.

In meetings facilitated by consultants, work groups are advising DWR on regional conditions in five regions: the Upper and Lower Sacramento River regions, the Upper and Lower San Joaquin River regions, and the Delta.

Although I have no technical expertise in flood management, my interest in the subject led me to apply to be part of the Delta Regional Work Group, listing both the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County and Restore the Delta as groups to which I could report on the work group’s activities. Much of the Delta lies in San Joaquin County, although it is of course a lightly-populated part of the county. This is a policy process, so any partisanship is regional.

Early in the process, about half the members of the Delta Regional Conditions Work Group expressed concerns about assuming that a peripheral canal or other conveyance structure would be a “future condition.” Transfer infrastructure, including pumps, has a huge impact on Delta hydrology. The group asked the consultants and DWR staff to talk to the Resources Agency about putting conveyance planning on hold while they dealt with the challenges of planning for flooding and emergency response in the existing Delta.

In November, Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman sent the work group a memorandum that they felt did not adequately address their concerns. Then Jerry Johns, DWR’s Deputy Director of Delta and Statewide Water Management, met with the group. Johns said that the plan is to build a canal that doesn’t depend on Delta levees but addresses habitat protection. This is the “co-equal goals” strategy that makes ecosystem restoration co-equal to water supply reliability.

*Planning for Flood Management, cont.*

As Senator Lois Wolk argued unsuccessfully during the past legislative session, and continues to argue, the co-equal goals leave the people of the Delta out of the equation.

The Delta Regional Conditions Work Group was asked to review draft documents prepared by consultants for DWR. It was wise and appropriate to involve local people in the review of these documents, because they reflected a bias that has informed recent policy discussions about the Delta.

For example, Delta levees were described as fragile and unreliable. (Delta engineers argue that many levees are in good conditions and others can be upgraded and maintained for a fraction of the cost of conveyance.) There was discussion of “restricted water supply diversions” and an emphasis on water supply availability and reliability for “major demand centers south of the Delta.” This reflects the view of the Delta as a kind of switching yard for water going elsewhere.



In the description of Likely Future Conditions, Delta agriculture and infrastructure received little attention. The Delta contains critical infrastructure—highways, railroads, shipping channels, electrical lines, natural gas lines, and existing water transfer facilities including the Mokelumne Aqueduct to the Bay Area. Changing the hydrology of the Delta by selectively abandoning some islands or diverting water around the Delta will affect this critical infrastructure in unpredictable ways.

Many members of the Delta Regional Conditions Work Group have been involved in similar State-sponsored efforts in the past, and they bring with them a high degree of skepticism about whether this process can actually address their concerns and incorporate their expertise.

Jerry Johns commented that the Delta in 50 years will not be what it is today, and no one would argue with that. The important question is, Whose vision will shape the way the Delta responds to the changes with which Nature is sure to confront us?

On February 3, the five regional conditions work groups will come together for a Valley-wide forum. The next step in the CVFPP process will consider potential actions for flood management.

# Climate Change, Food Waste and BioEnergy

By Rick Bettis, Natural Resources Director, LWV Sacramento County

*(Note: We are reprinting this article from the December 2009 Sacramento Voter because it addresses a consequence of population growth that we often forget to consider and describes an innovation solution.)*

The collection, transport and disposal of solid waste remain the most difficult environmental problems. The siting of landfills can result in significant environmental impacts such as land use conflicts and potential groundwater pollution. The City of Sacramento hauls its waste to Lockwood Nevada due to the lack of a good local disposal site. Climate change increases from the carbon emissions from the handling and transport of the material, and from the methane emissions from landfills.

The only truly good solution is waste reduction and recycling. An innovative partial solution to the solid waste issue is the use of an Anaerobic Digester BioEnergy facility for the treatment of food wastes. A pilot facility has been operating successfully on the campus of UC Davis for two years. Anaerobic digestions uses bacteria to break down organic matter and has been successfully used in waste water treatment plants for many years.

A scaled-up version of the UC Davis facility is proposed for construction on the grounds of Folsom Prison. This facility is being designed to process up to 100 tons of food waste per day. It would produce energy equal to an estimated 770,000 gallons of gasoline per year or the equivalent of taking over 6,000 cars off the road. Wastewater will be treated sufficiently to be used for the irrigation of outdoor landscaping. Residual solids would be used in compost.

This project has received a substantial grant from the California Energy Commission and may receive additional funding from the US EPA. The Sacramento area Congressional delegation supports it, as well a many others such as the Whole Foods market chain and local environmental and public interest organizations.

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## LWVSJC Member Recommended for Achievement Award

At the recommendation of Dee Matteucci, the LWVSJC board of directors has nominated Lauren Ah Tye to receive a Women of Achievement Award at the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Susan B. Anthony Banquet sponsored by the San Joaquin County Commission on the Status of Women. Lauren would be honored for her work organizing a running a mobile food van reaching the most needy people not served by other organizations.

Although the Commission has not yet made its selections for awards recipients, we want to congratulate Lauren on her nomination and praise her for her efforts to serve the needy.

The Banquet will be held on Monday, February 15, 2010 at Stockton Golf and Country Club, 3800 W. Country Club Blvd., Stockton 95204. For more information, please contact Beverly Fitch McCarthy SJCCSW Chair, at linley17@comcast.net

## League of Women Voters Delta Water Forum

On January 23 in Antioch, the Diablo Valley League of Women Voters and the San Joaquin County League will co-sponsor a program on "Our Delta Water." Panelists scheduled to participate are

- Dr. Gregory Gartrell, Assistant Manager of the Contra Costa Water District
- Susanna Schendorf, 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Director for Joan Buchanan
- Kari Fisher, counsel for the Farm Bureau
- Karla Nemeth, Resources Agency liaison to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan
- David Nesmith of the Environmental Water Caucus
- Dr. Lawrence Kolb, former Water Quality Control Board assistant director
- Mary N. Piepho, Contra Costa County Supervisor

The forum pulls together panelists with a variety of perspectives on the current situation in the largest estuary on the west coast of the Americas, this treasure in our backyard. This will be a good opportunity to ask questions regarding the recently passed legislative package of water bills, including a water bond.

The forum will last from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with registration beginning at 9:30. It will be held in the Antioch Historical Hall, 1500 W. 4th Street in Antioch. A group of LWVSJC members will be carpooling to Antioch. To join them, please contact President Jane Wagner-Tyack, 209-365-1986, JaneTyack@mac.com

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### *Circle of Support*

*The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County expresses its thanks to the following individuals for their generous donations to enable us to go forward with our work.*

*Rosemary & Trevor Atkinson*

*Mario & Jeannie D'Angeli*

*Ella Evans*

*Lee Hemminger*

*Teresa Johnson*

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*Dante Nomellini, Esq.*

*Anne Ramacher*

*Stan & Dorothy Sandelius*

*Mary Lois & Syd Thompson*

*Alice Welch*



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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 14 – Board Meeting

Saturday, January 23 – “Our Delta Water,” Antioch, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (see inside for details)

Saturday, January 30 – “New State Prison Facilities: Background and Prospects,” Valley Brew in Stockton, 9 a.m. to noon (see inside for details)

Thursday, February 11 – Board Meeting

Monday, February 15 – Susan B. Anthony Dinner, Stockton Golf and Country Club

Thursday, March 11 – Board Meeting

Saturday, March 13 – General Meeting – Topic: County Water Issues

**Note : The Board meets at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Hospice of San Joaquin, 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Members are welcome to attend Board meetings.**