



The Voter

Members consider program focus for 2017-2018

Fourteen LWVSCJ members met at the Loyko home on January 28 to discuss possible program issues for the coming fiscal year.

Presenters President Christeen Ferree and Second Vice President/Advocacy Chair Cate White provided an introduction to the Program Planning process. The League Program consists of issues we choose for concerted study, education, and action at the local, state, and national levels. Program planning is the process by which we jointly decided where and how we will focus our resources—member time, money, reputation—over the next fiscal year (July, 2017 through June, 2018).

The State League has recommended that local Leagues be “nimble and flexible” with this year’s program to be able to pivot to major issues that may arise, given the unpredictability of the current Administration.



Program Planning Meeting attendees. Photo: Van Ha To-Cowell

Program Planning Meeting, continued

Attendees broke into groups for discussion of possible program topics, narrowed their lists to three to five choices, then presented those choices to the whole group. Each participant then ranked topics, with points assigned corresponding to each participant's top three choices.

Immigration education and advocacy received the largest number of voter points, with health care, especially single payer, getting the second largest number of points. Participants were also concerned about environmental issues in the Stockton general plan and about water availability for development projects under all general plans in San Joaquin County. Money in politics, voting rights, school vouchers and charter schools, and Proposition 13 reform also received participant votes.

The LWVSJC board will be voting on a final program and then presenting it for member approval at the annual meeting in May.

State and National Leagues respond to Administration actions

On February 1, both the state and the national Leagues of Women Voters responded to action by the new Administration to ban Muslim immigrants.

Under the heading "Our response against POTUS Donald J. Trump's Muslim ban," LWVC said:

- We oppose deportation of undocumented immigrants.
- We reject discrimination based on religion, including orders or actions that target Muslims or immigrants from majority-Muslim nations.
- We fight discrimination and any threats to civil and human rights.

LWVUS president Chris Carson issued this statement on immigration and other issues the League is following under the new Administration:

"The League is opposed to deportation of non-criminal undocumented immigrants.

"The LWV supports cities, towns, counties and states that make a decision not to cooperate with federal deportation and enforcement actions that include non-criminal undocumented immigrants. Moreover, the Trump Administration's orders are of dubious legality.

"It is simply wrong, and a perversion of the American system of justice, for the Executive Branch to refuse to obey federal court orders.

"The LWV is opposed to discrimination, including discrimination in immigration, based on religion. The Trump Administration's orders appear to be targeted at Muslims and immigrants from majority-Muslims nations.

"We would like to remind all our members that we are faced with many challenges to our positions and the League is involved in serious efforts to address them. Among these, we spent last weekend anticipating the issuance of an Executive Order investigating 'voter fraud'. We continue to monitor this situation and are ready to issue a statement if that occurs. We also continue our efforts to lobby on ACA in Congress."

Preventing Gun Violence in Our Community: Shaping Policy with Hope for the Future

On Saturday, March 18th from 9:30 until noon, The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County will host a forum about gun violence prevention in our community. Co-sponsoring the event is *Cleveland School Remembers-Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence Chapter*. The forum will be held at Zion Lutheran Church Grace Hall, 808 Porter Avenue in Stockton.

Gun violence continues to be an ongoing issue for our city, but local organizations are working in partnership to mitigate this public health and safety issue.

Mayor Michael Tubbs will be the keynote speaker for the event. Chief Eric Jones of the Stockton Police Department will talk about his department's work with gun violence reduction strategies. Gretchen Newby, the Executive Director of *Friends Outside*, will present information about programs that redirect incarcerated individuals away from violence and toward a successful, productive life. All three presenters work closely with each other and with the community to inform their programs, and our League is fortunate to be able to bring them together for this important presentation.

A panel discussion will culminate the presentation, and audience members will be encouraged to submit questions to the panel.

If you have questions, please contact Julie Schardt, juliaschardt@gmail.com.



The League's Position on Gun Control

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety. The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background check, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification. The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

Update on water issues

Delta Tunnels

The Department of Water Resources has finalized environmental documents for the WaterFix tunnels project. Next steps are for the USEPA to issue a Record of Decision under NEPA, the National Environmental Protection Act, and for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to certify the EIR under CEQA. The EPA must find that WaterFix doesn't violate the Endangered Species Act. The State expects to have federal permits approved in 2017 and to have construction underway in 2018.



Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has already purchased islands in the Delta and is in a position to purchase more along the tunnels' alignment, which would save the Water Contractors costs for eminent domain.

In order to operate the tunnels, DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation need approval from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to divert project water in the north Delta rather than where they currently divert, in the south Delta. They also need a Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

DWR and the Bureau submitted their petition for a change in point of diversion last August, and during the fall, the Water Board held evidentiary hearings and took testimony on the petition. At issue are whether the project in effect initiates a new water right, and whether flows and water quality would be altered such that a legal user would be injured. The hearings have ended, and the Water Board is expected to rule on the admissibility of evidence early this Spring.

Paying for WaterFix

A 2015 cost-benefit analysis of the tunnels commissioned by the water contractors—available only thanks to public records act requests—indicates that billions of dollars in federal and/or state subsidies would be needed to pay for the tunnels. The \$3.9 billion subsidy mentioned in the WaterFix cost-benefit analysis rises to \$6.5 billion when actual, not discounted, costs are considered (according to one economist who reviewed the analysis).

Officials had previously maintained that only those receiving export water—not the taxpayers—would pay the tunnels' costs. But rural/agricultural water users would face more costs than benefits, accounting for the need for subsidies (according to the analysis). Taxpayers would be one source of such subsidies. Taxing authority of water districts would guarantee some bonds.

The 2015 study also analyzed benefits based on the assumption that the tunnels would make more export water available. This was despite official statements that the tunnels would not result in extra water availability.

Restore the Delta notes that cost estimates are being made based on a project for which only 10% of design has been completed.

Water issues update, continued

Delta water quality and flows

The SWRCB is taking comments on its Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan proposal to adopt scientifically-based instream flow standards to increase unimpaired flow in the San Joaquin River and its tributaries. There is general agreement that increased flows are necessary to protect fisheries, habitat, and instream uses in the Delta and the Estuary. However, increasing unimpaired flow in the three tributaries affected by this phase of the update—the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers—has major economic consequences for regions already challenged to coordinate surface water with groundwater management under the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). A later phase of this update will address flows on the Sacramento River and its tributaries. The Water Quality Control Plan, delegated to the SWRCB by the federal Clean Water Act, has not been updated since 1995. Export water is not currently under discussion.



San Joaquin County Groundwater Management

County water agencies are on schedule for filing applications to be Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) under SGMA. They have approved a joint powers authority to coordinate governance and can now turn their full attention to developing actual plans to manage groundwater in this overdrafted basin.

From drought to floods

Following this year's unprecedented rains and the near-disaster at Oroville Dam, Governor Brown has proposed that the legislature spend \$437 million for flood control, a figure considerably below the estimated \$50 billion cost of upgrading California's water infrastructure, including more than 1400 dams and thousands of miles of levees. This is in addition to local infrastructure needs.

The League and others have argued for getting more water into underground storage rather than behind on-stream dams like Temperance Flat. Friends of the River points out that dams in general can't add much to the state's storage because most suitable places are already dammed.

Water issues update, continued

In addition, in a very wet year like this one, the main challenge is controlling flows to prevent flooding on the valley floors. This makes increased use of floodplains like the Yolo Bypass and basins designed for groundwater recharge an especially attractive alternative to highly engineered, more expensive storage infrastructure.

State versus federal initiatives

The California Senate has introduced a *Preserve California* legislative package to establish legally enforceable protections for the environment, public health, worker safety, and other areas of federal regulatory law that could be affected by Trump Administration initiatives. The package includes SB 49, the California Environmental Defense Act (de León and Stern); SB 50, the Public Lands Protection Act (Allen) to discourage conveyances of federal lands to private developers for resource extraction; and SB 51, The Whistleblower and Public Data Protection Act (Jackson).



Roaring River levees overtop at Grizzly Island in Solano County, in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, January 13, 2017. (Florence Low/California Department of Water Resources)

The federal Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), which passed in December 2016 with the support of Senator Dianne Feinstein but over the vehement opposition of retiring Senator Barbara Boxer, is generally viewed to be unfavorable to Northern California water interests. However, California Water Research analyst Deirdre Des Jardins has discovered in this 277 page document authority to expedite completion of feasibility studies on projects that include flood risk management on the Lower San Joaquin River, including Reclamation District 17 in the south County west of Manteca. Strengthening levees in RD 17 would benefit Lathrop, Manteca, and Stockton. Des Jardins' February 27, 2017 blog post looks at flood risk in the Stockton area and what local, state, and federal agencies are doing, or not doing, about it. Her blog is California Water Research, cah2oresearch.com.

Save the dates

Lunch & Learn on “ACE Forward”

On Tuesday, April 25, Jennifer Hidalgo, Project Consultant for the ACE (Altamont Corridor Express) Train will share information about the proposed expansion and upgrades to the current service and how that will affect our valley communities. Join us from noon to 1 p.m. or 1:30 at Siena Italian Restaurant, 16925 Harlan Road, off I-5 in Lathrop. Attendees will be able to order off the menu.

Dr. Pamela Eibeck to speak at LWVSJC Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for the LWVSJC annual meeting on Wednesday, May 31. Dr. Pamela A. Eibeck, 24th President of University of the Pacific, will address attendees. President Eibeck's commitment to community, including the Beyond Our Gates effort to improve early literacy in Stockton, was recognized by the 2015 ATHENA Leadership Award. She also serves on the Valley Vision Board, the Greater Sacramento Area Economic Council Board of Directors, and the Board of Directors for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU).

State League Convention in Sacramento this year

The 2017 League of Women Voters of California biennial convention will be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento from June 1st to 4th.

Scheduled speakers include Secretary of State Alex Padilla and Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. Also addressing the convention will be Celinda Lake, a leading Democratic Party political strategist; Chris Hoene, Executive Director of the California Budget and Policy Center; U.C. Berkeley professor and author Lisa García Bedolla, whose research focuses on how marginalization and inequality structure political and educational opportunities; and Jill Darling of USC's Center for Economic and Social Research.



Jack Ohman, *Sacramento Bee* editorial cartoonist and Pulitzer Prize winner, will be the featured speaker at the Local League Hosted Friday Night Dinner, “Paddlewheel & Pulitzer,” aboard the Delta King.

Attendees may register for one day or for the entire Convention. The Convention features a variety of workshops, caucuses, and other events. For registration information, visit the LWVC website. Early bird registration rates are available until April 15.

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Thank you *Circle of Support* donors! Your generous contributions enable us to make the League of Women Voters' serious endeavors a success.

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Join the League's Circle of Support

Checks payable to the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County (LWVSJC) may be used for advocacy and are not tax deductible. Checks payable to LWVSJC Education Fund may be claimed as a tax deduction.

Please mail donations to P. O. Box 4548, Stockton, CA 95204.

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President's Message

Say what you will about the current political climate, you have to admit that these are interesting times to be associated with the League of Women Voters!

In recent months, many of our local members have been quite involved in effecting change. Not only have some been recognized for their advocacy efforts (Julie Schardt, recent Susan B. Anthony Women of Achievement award recipient), our local members are speaking out in the form of letters to the editor. We've seen recent letters on a variety of issues from members Rosie Bachand, Bev Blum, Donna Brown, Kathy Casenave, Peggy Guttieri,

Margo Praus, Joan Ray, Ronda Sanders, Daphne Shaw, Van Ha To-Cowell, and Jane Wagner-Tyack, to name a few. (I've even sent a letter or two, myself.)

There continues to be a plethora of opportunities to advocate and help educate our community in the coming months. We have educational forums planned in March (Gun Violence Prevention) and April (Immigration Issues). At our Program Planning Meeting in February, there were lively discussions on a variety of topics to focus our Program efforts on during the next fiscal year.

We've taken the first steps toward advocating for change by keeping ourselves informed. Many of us also participated in the Women's March in January. Now it's time to follow up that resolve by becoming more connected to the League.

We welcome and encourage membership engagement in all aspects of our local league activities. To that end, we are in the process of establishing committees to assist the League with its education and advocacy endeavors. If you would like to serve on a committee, please feel free to contact me or another member of our Board. Your thoughts, ideas and any amount of time – large or small – would be very much appreciated.

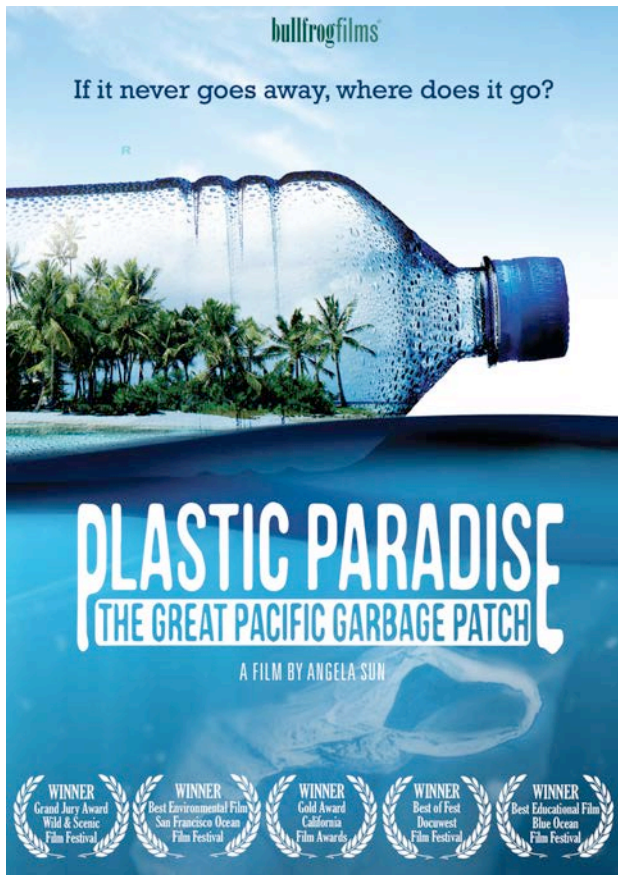
In League,

Christeen Ferree
President, LWVSJC

Special Announcement

According to League Bylaws, it is incumbent upon the president of the League to send the name and contact information of the nominating committee chair to the membership. It shall be the duty of the nominating committee chair to solicit from members their suggestions for nominations of next year's officers and directors as well as next year's nominating committee chair and committee members. Any member may send suggestions to the nominating committee. The election shall be conducted at the League's annual meeting.

This year's Nominating Committee Chair is Rosie Bachand. Rosie may be contacted at obgnnpc@pacbell.net or (209) 639-5258.



The Dangers of Plastic

In January, the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County and Delta-Sierra Group cosponsored a screening of the film *Plastic Paradise: the Great Pacific Garbage Patch*.

This film highlights the importance of action such as the passage of the Plastic Bag Ban that was voted through in November 2016 in California. But more than just the damage that plastic trash itself causes, the film maker presents a serious look at the toxins that are leaching into our bodies.

There was an excellent turnout for the event at the Central United Methodist Church and there was interest in maintaining communication to follow up on some group actions in our community. For more information on a screening of the film for your group contact Margo Praus, MargoPraus@msn.com



LWVSJC welcomes your participation!

Although the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County doesn't hold regular membership meetings, we do have educational programs and social events throughout the year. (See the calendar on the last page.) We welcome members' involvement in any areas that interest them. National, state, and local League policies and positions support education and advocacy on a wide range of subjects. The fact that we aren't working actively on an issue right now doesn't mean that we couldn't do that if members think it is important.

In addition, members are welcome at LWVSJC board meetings. The board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. at the home of one of the board members. Please contact President Christeen Ferree for the location of any board meeting you would like to attend.

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.

Immigration – Learning the Basics

The U.S. immigration process can be complicated and confusing for immigrants as well as most Americans. To provide an understanding of the American immigration system, The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County will be presenting the first in a series of education programs on our American immigration process on Saturday, April 29th beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The program will be held at the Health Plan of San Joaquin County Building, 7751 S Manthey Rd., French Camp, adjacent to the San Joaquin General Hospital. Free parking is available.

The first program, **Immigration – Learning the Basics**, will provide an overview of the immigration process and will address the following issues and more:

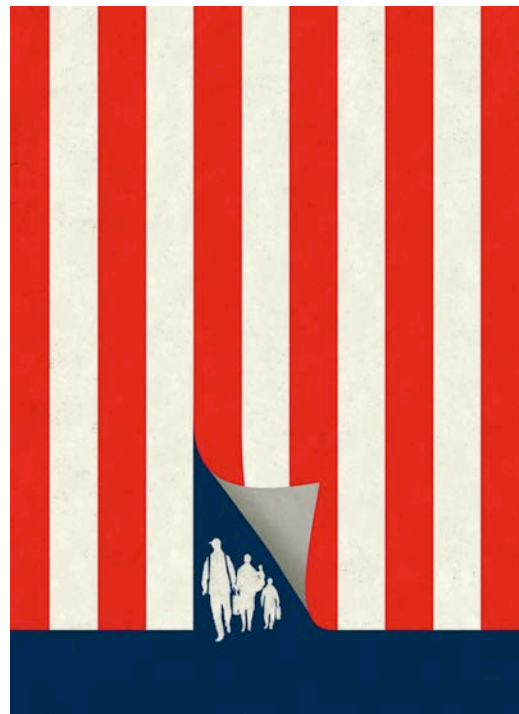
- What is the history of the immigration system?
- What is the purpose of a green card and a visa, and the time frame to get them? What is the path to citizenship?
- How long does it take to become a citizen and what does it cost?
- What is the process for a family to go through the immigration process? Is it different than for an individual?
- What is the vetting process?
- What is the process for refugees and what about political asylum?

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote voter registration and participation in government through education. This program is an education forum only. No immigration services will be available. The program is free and open to the public.

Coffee and refreshments will be served beginning at 9:30 a.m. and the program will take place from 10 a.m. until noon.

Presenters will include staff members from Catholic Charities Diocese and from the Sacramento office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Services).

Come join us to learn more about our American immigration system. For more information, contact Susan Mora Loyko, smloyko@gmail.com



Graphic by Brian Stauffer for The New Yorker

Calendar

Saturday, March 18 9:30 a.m.- Noon	Educational Forum on Gun Violence Prevention Zion Lutheran Church Grace Hall 808 Porter Ave., Stockton
Tuesday, April 25 Noon - 1:00/1:30	Lunch & Learn "ACE Forward" (Presentation on Altamont Corridor Express) Siena Italian Restaurant 16925 Harland Rd., Lathrop
Saturday, April 29 9:30 a.m.- Noon	Educational Forum on Immigration Health Plan of San Joaquin 7751 S. Manthey Rd. French Camp
Wednesday, May 31 Time TBA	LWVSJC Annual Meeting Speaker: Dr. Pamela Eibeck, President, UOP Location TBA
Thursday-Sunday June 1-4	LWVC Convention 2017 "Capitol Connection" Sacramento

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