



December 2004
January 2005

The Sacramento Voter

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Unit Meetings

The Week of 12/13

Monday 6:15 pm Mid City T. Swift 453-8707 5308 Shepard Ave.

Tuesday 9:15 am Morning Suburban M. McCullough 967-7382 2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael

Tuesday 9:30 am Greenhaven/Land Park M. Hopkins 422-6958 45 Sunlite Circle

Tuesday 1:00 pm East Sacramento E. Hickey 456-3794 1307 39th St.

Tuesday 7:00 pm Elk Grove N. Myers 689-6943 9710 Parktree Way

Wednesday 10:00 am Foothill/Sunrise B. Seamas 988-5840 8085 Capitola, Fair Oaks

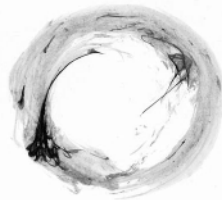
Education Update-Unit Meetings

by Thomas D. Swift

The LWVC is in the process of updating its 1985 position on education to address new laws impacting education (e.g. Proposition 98, new state and federal standards, a 1992 court ruling that the state must provide public education that is both free and equal) and other issues affecting the quality of public education in California. For this the LWVC Education Fund Education Update Study Committee, headed by Joanne Leavitt, recently completed a detailed study, "Public Education in California," describing California's system of public education, its issues and problems. Despite reform efforts like reduction in class sizes, California students currently test ninth from the bottom among the 50 states in math, reading and science, evidence that we are failing our state's children—California's future workers and citizens.

At a general meeting of our membership on November 7, Ms. Leavitt presented a report on this important study. She stressed the importance of the study's questionnaire whereby league members' are asked to provide answers to a number of education policy questions. These answers by statewide League members will provide direction to her committee for their revision of the League's position on education. While many Units met to discuss this topic in November, we encourage any Units meeting in December to also spend time answering questions raised in the questionnaire. We hope that as many members as possible will attend unit meetings during the week of December 13-16 to help with this important project. The text of the league study, Public Education in California, is available at www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly.

Many organizations, including the League, have questioned whether there has been time even for organizations, let alone the general public, to learn about the proposals and comment intelligently on them. We will advocate for a process adequate to address the issues and will be submitting comments to the commission and passing along information to you as the process goes forward.



Note: No Unit meetings in January because of the General Meeting on 13th. Everyone is welcome to attend any unit they choose regardless of geographic area. Call to confirm and for directions.

Hats Off to Democracy Party

League members honored a number of candidates at our Hat's Off to Democracy Party that was held at Barton's Gallery on Monday evening, November 15. The party was great fun, with lots of good food and interesting discussions with those candidates who were able to attend: Lawanna Montgomery (Elk Grove City Council), Jennifer Baker (Natomas School Board), Ken Adams (Sacramento City Unified School Board), Roger Niello (State Assembly, District 5) and Braulio Torres (Elk Grove City Council). We salute all candidates for giving up so much of their time and energy to help make democracy work.

See *Post Election Party* on page 3 for some pictures from this gala.

Smart Voter Thanks

Thanks to all the volunteers who help make Smart Voter possible. It is an invaluable tool for getting hard-to-find information about local candidates, as well as about all election choices in your area. Many thanks to Donna Chipps for spearheading this effort. If you would like to be a future volunteer, contact Donna Chipps at sv@lwvsacramento.org or call LWVS office (447-8683).

Topics for the 2004-05 League Year

This year's topics for discussion cover both statewide and local issues. The following are the topics for discussion:

- October-Pros & Cons of the Ballot Propositions
- November-LWVC Education Study
- January-"California Voices"
- February-Public Financing of Arenas
- March-Issues of Aging
- April-Energy Regulation

The topics included in this list are to be covered through a combination of general meetings and unit meetings.

The January issue will be covered in a general meeting to be held the 13th, at a location to be determined. "California Voices" is the result of a joint LWVC and California Public Libraries project in which students

and other people who vote in low numbers engaged in conversations with state officials. We'll get to see some of those conversations and learn what's on the minds of these potential voters.

Please keep in mind that this list is subject to change if political circumstances change and an issue becomes irrelevant or if an unforeseen issue becomes "hot" and more compelling than those announced here. One such issue may be the February topic, public financing for arenas. If there is no special election in March on the issue, a different topic might be introduced.

Watch the Voter for more details on all these topics. If there are other issues or topics that you would like to see addressed in the future please contact Carol Moon Goldberg at the League office.

President's Column: The League is Alive and Well - at St. Francis High School

By Suzanne Phinney

I had the pleasure of delivering the keynote address to St. Francis High School students at their Mock Election program, held on November 2 (Election Day). The all-morning event was organized and carried out by the "League of Women Voters," that is, the students at St. Francis, who were following in the many footsteps of the League.

The St. Francis League members moderated three forums: the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidate forums, and a forum on Proposition 70. First, the League "President" introduced the candidates, who were accompanied by their wives and children, all attired in appropriate dress. They even had their own Secret Service entourage, in black suits and black shades (of course). The respective Pro and Con speakers for the Proposition debate were also introduced as was the panel of questioners: Maria Shriver, Cokie Roberts, and Connie Chung.

The girls did a tremendous job moderating the debates, posing the questions, and providing succinct, but informative answers. Like all League forums, the candidates/speakers were not privy to the questions in advance. And, of course, there were timers and girls with signs to indicate when time had elapsed.

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It was an incredible effort, obviously very well-planned and meticulously carried out. Over 200 students were involved. While I was thrilled that they modeled themselves after the League, I was a bit saddened to think that the St. Francis League showed a lot more enthusiasm and energy than did my own. This is not to say that LWVS did not have our own share of election volunteers, but the number certainly did not match St. Francis. Is our energy fading, our enthusiasm a thing of the past?

Your Board is very concerned about the future of LWVS. For one thing, we only have 6 Board members, instead of our usual 16 or so. The Board is working extra hard to keep things going, but that means attending to the absolute must-do's and relegating other efforts like recruiting and mentoring new members, to another day. What will happen next year when your current Board steps down because they can't continue to put forth at this level?

LWVS is at a critical junction. We cannot maintain ourselves with just a handful of leaders. Your Board will convene a Committee to determine where LWVS goes from here, because the six of us do not have the answers. Please help us define the League's future. Perhaps we can follow in the footsteps of the St. Francis High School students, and yet again be a thriving, dynamic organization committed to the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Post Election Party

Here are some photos from the LWVS post election party.



Past President Trudy Schafer chats with newly elected Assembly Member Roger Niello



LWVS Vice- President Phinney thanks the Candidates.

Voter Service Thanks You

by Hazel Bergtholdt

We were very busy this election with registration, candidate forums, voting machine demonstrations, and speaker presentations on the pros and cons.

Registration:

Eileen Heaser and Elizabeth Byerly and all their volunteers worked hard to keep up with demand and keep the voter registration forms stocked in post offices and other public buildings throughout the Sacramento County area. Additionally, we had volunteers registering voters at tables and booths at celebrations such as "Juneteenth" at Negro Bar, to Fairs like Elk Grove's Harvest Festival, Natomas Fall Festival, and the Wine and Art Festival in Sacramento. We reached out to the youth vote by partnering with Rock the Vote and other youth organizations and registering voters at Cure Concerts, Smackdown wrestling events, and at the Rainbow Festival. We even registered voters in conjunction with 101.1 remote morning show presentations in Citrus Heights, West Sacramento and downtown. We registered voters at two assisted living facilities as well. All in all we had around 25 registration events and registered close to 350 voters. I want to thank all our volunteers who helped out.

Candidate Forums:

We put on the Metro Cable forum again this year and tagged an excellent debate about Measure A onto the end of it. Additionally we moderated forums in Roseville, Arden Arcade, Folsom, North Highlands, and Natomas.

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Thank you to all my moderators and timers. I learned two lessons. First never agree to help out with a forum that is scheduled on any religious holiday even if an alternative is given. Second, set a deadline for forums so that we are not pressured at the last minute to helping out with a forum that we haven't thoroughly researched.

New Voting Machine Demonstrations:

Dannetta Garcia is a star. She took on the County's request to demonstrate the new voting machines and continued even after some officials challenged her impartiality. She was all over the county as well. Her work paid off. In all of the eleven precincts I visited as an Election Observer on Election Day, I didn't see one problem with the voters using the machines. Everything ran smoothly.

Speaker Appearances:

We gave around 50 speaking engagements. These occurred all over Sacramento and Placer County: from Lincoln Hills to Rocklin, Elk Grove to Natomas, Citrus Heights and Arden Arcade, to downtown. We spoke to women's groups, senior citizens, mental health organizations, civic groups, professional organizations, and college students. I especially thank all my speakers. It was challenge this year because there was great interest in our pros and cons and we were down to very few of the publications by the end.

Media Attention:

During this election I was interviewed on Good Day Sacramento live for the Smackdown registration drive. Additionally, I appeared on FYI on the local Infinity radio stations and presented ALL pros and cons within 30 minutes. Finally, some of you might have seen Dannetta on KCRA 3 on election day. She continued a tradition that was started last election where she informed the public regarding questions they had about the election.

We worked hard to register and educate and hope that we helped bring about the 58% turnout in Sacramento county, up from the 49.6% turnout for the Primary election. So a heart felt thank you to all my volunteers! You helped to make democracy work!

Alliance for Better Campaigns' Media Focus

By Rick Bettis

The LWVS has joined a local effort organized by California Common Cause to aid the Alliance for Better Campaigns' national effort to motivate the television media to provide more and better news coverage of political candidates and issues. The Alliance is a public interest group that seeks to improve elections by promoting campaigns in which the most useful information reaches the greatest number of citizens. They advocate reforms to reduce the cost and increase the flow of communication; open the political process to more competition; and facilitate and encourage voter participation.

They are working to assure that broadcasters meet their statutory obligation to use the publicly owned airwaves to serve the public interest in a way that would help revitalize democracy.

The Alliance is funded by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Open Society Institute, the Joyce foundation, and the Stuart Family Foundation. The Honorary Co-chairs of the Alliance are Jimmy Carter, Walter Cronkite, and Gerald Ford.

The LWVS has joined California Common Cause and other media activists in an effort to determine what the local television stations are doing to meet their public service obligation relative to elections. This mostly volunteer "Media Working Group" has reviewed the local station "Public Files" and has met with the Station Managers and News Directors of Channels 3, 10, 19, 31 and 40. The Channel 3 management also spoke for Channel 58, which broadcasts a half-hour version of their news daily. Channel 6 was not approached since their schedule does not include regular locally produced news programs, and Channel 13 declined to participate. Channels 3, 19, 31 and 40 followed up with letters documenting their activities.

The goal of this effort was to convince each station to sign a pledge to broadcast at least 2 hours of election news coverage each week during the "prime time" hours of 5 to 11:30 PM during the six week period before the Election. None of the Stations signed this pledge, however those participating were open and gracious in discussing their news service activities. When asked, they all stated their commitment to balanced coverage and that they were not influenced by corporate directives or pressure.

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They cited their broadcast of network programming and noted their local activities as summarized in the following paragraphs.

Channel 3

- Minimum of five minutes of election news coverage nightly
- Proposition and candidate profiles in the form of longer more in-depth stories
- “Adwatch” stories that evaluate political commercials on truth and effectiveness.
- Two half-hour special programs on minority voting, and a guide to the Ballot.
- “Pure sound”—longer sound bites of candidate quotes.
- Network programming including the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates.

Channel 10

- Political coverage in each newscast, including a “Truth Test” to evaluate political commercials.
- Four half-hour shows on the Propositions, explaining how the Propositions impact peoples lives.
- Running of news flashes at selected gas station pumps
- In-depth pros and cons of the Propositions on their web site.
- Broadcast of network campaign coverage including the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates.

Channel 19

- In three daily one hour “Noticias,” they believe they devote more time to candidate coverage than other local stations.
- In-depth analyses of ballot measure oriented toward their Latino audience.
- “Voe Y Vos” the only weekly half-hour Spanish language public policy programs in the nation.
- Spanish language coverage of major debates
- Community outreach efforts to encourage Latinos to register and vote.

Channel 31

- Includes political and election coverage on the daily three hour “Good Day Sacramento” programs with an alternative human-interest perspective.

- “Make It Count” program produced jointly by the UPN network and CBS with exclusive polls and interviews with campaign operative and observers.

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Channel 40

- Nightly news stories of campaign coverage
- Broadcast of Presidential and Vice Presidential debates.
- Prime time “Local town Hall” special on the gaming propositions 68 and 70
- Free airtime offer of 5 minutes to major candidates for Senate and Congress
- Public service announcement urging viewers to vote.

The local Media Working Group also plans to determine the amount of revenue received by each of the stations for political advertisements. A report will be prepared and made public and submitted to the Alliance as input to their national study.

State of the Community Luncheon Update

Plans are proceeding well for the 2005 State of the Community Luncheon. Save the date - Wednesday February 23.

The Steering Committee met recently to identify potential sponsors for the event. We have nine committed and enthusiastic members: Steve Goldberg (Downey Brand), Jillian Schwinn (SureWest Communications), Jennifer Ortega (Raley's), Tina Treis (Perry-Smith LLP), Suzanne Phinney (Aspen Environmental Group), Margaret Teichert (Kleinfelder), Jan Geiger, Teri Munger (Hewlett Packard) and Jane Thomson (McGeorge School of Law).

Hats off to Steve Goldberg who indicated that Downey Brand would be our first corporate sponsor at \$1000 and to Jan Geiger who became our second sponsor, but with an immediate \$500 check! Steve also sent off an email right after the meeting to Wells Fargo asking them to be a \$5000 sponsor. That's enthusiasm, which is much appreciated.

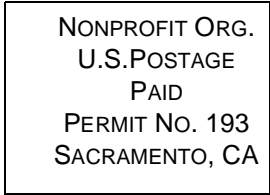
Letters are going out to potential sponsors and the committee members will be making follow-up calls.

We still need help on arrangements, tickets, table signs and the like. So all you party animals please give Suzanne Phinney a call at 379-0350.



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Time Value

The Sacramento Voter is published ten times a year by the League of Women Voters of Sacramento. Membership is open to all United States citizens, 18 years of age or older. Membership dues, payable to the league of Women Voters of Sacramento, are \$50 per year (\$75 for families). Contributions to the LVW and membership dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes.

League of Women Voters Sacramento Mission Statement

To encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

We're Updating Our Roster

Please tell us of any changes in your:

- Address
- Phone number (home or work)
- Email address.

Call the LWVS office at 447-VOTE (8683) or lwvs@lwvsacramento.org.

LWVS Diversity Policy

LWVS affirms, in both its values and practices, its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation based on national origin, race, gender, creed/religion, age, sexual orientation or disability. (Adopted 2001)

The League recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. LWV subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

The League affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of America in its board, staff and programs.