



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

DECEMBER 2008

GENERAL MEETING

*Join us for a presentation by Trudy Schafer
On how to analyze and follow bills in the legislature*

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

7 to 9 PM

USC State Capitol Center, 1800 I Street, Sacramento 95811

Trudy Schafer, a long-time member of the LWV of Sacramento County, is the staff Senior Director for Program for the League of Women Voters of California. She represents the LWVC in lobbying at the Capitol as well as on ballot measure campaigns.

Come hear the nuts and bolts of the legislative process as she talks about timelines for legislative action, the process and timing for League advocacy, and the basics of analyzing legislation. She'll also mention good sources of information about bills.

Whether you want to be more involved in League advocacy or more effective in following your own favorite issues, you will benefit from knowing how bills are structured and how to evaluate them.

**BOARD MEETING: MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 5:30 PM,
1910 CHATSWORTH LANE, CARMICHAEL**

2008-2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy holiday season and to call your attention to upcoming activities.

LWVUS: Delegates at LWVUS Convention 2008 voted to study the advisability of using the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact among the states as a method for electing the U.S. President. NPV materials are starting to appear on the LWVUS web site. Currently a general background paper and the text of the NPV compact are available. The pros and cons papers, the consensus questions, and a resource list will be forthcoming. To access materials on the LWVUS web site, click on "Members" on the bar. There is a NPV Quick Link on the next screen in the lower right corner. We expect to hold our consensus meetings in April.

The June 2008 LWVUS Convention identified health care education as one of the top priorities for action during the next two years. The LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force (HCET) was established in October to design a program for educating our members about health care. If you would like to volunteer to help implement this educational campaign at the local level, please e-mail League Board member Lola Acosta at lolaa@winfirst.com or phone Lola at (916) 920-9414.

League sponsored email lists. I recommend that you join other committed League activists online by joining discussion lists. Choose the lists that fit your areas of interests or your role in League. On the LWVUS web site click on "Members" on the bar, then click on "Get Involved". Note that the discussion lists now allow you to manage your subscription type by choosing "Digest, No-Mail, or Normal" to select one email a day, no email at all, or an email for every contribution to the discussion. And it really works. I receive a daily digest of the NPV study discussions, and I receive no email for the Health Care Reform (so I sign on to participate).

LWVC: State program planning will take place in all of the local Leagues in the next two months in advance of the May 2009 biennial state League convention. We will schedule our meeting in January. I recommend that you sign up for the state League E-NEWS if you are not already receiving this online LWVC newsletter.

LWVSC Calendar:

January 2009: State Program Planning

February 2009: LWVUS Birthday

March 2009: Sunshine Week

April 2009: LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact Study

May 2009: Health Care Education

May 15-17, 2009: LWVC League Convention, Long Beach

May 30, 2009: LWVSC Annual Meeting

REMINISCENCES OF A POLL WORKER

By Catherine Troka

“Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.”

Abraham Lincoln – found in *Precinct Officers Manual*, Sacramento County Registrar of Voters

On November 4, 2008 many people did not turn their backs to the fire - they voted. On Nov. 5 people asked me “Did you hear Barack Obama’s acceptance speech? Did you hear John McCain’s concession speech?” They usually added that they were moved to tears, no matter what their political tendencies. To both questions I had to answer “no,” because at the time I was helping to close a poll where radios, televisions and cell phones are not allowed. Nonetheless, I was very much involved with the election because I served as a Precinct Officer on November 4.

I arrived at my assigned polling place at 6:00 AM and began setting up for the Presidential election of 2008. By 7:00 AM our five-member team had the polling place ready for the voters. We had posted signs - some inside and some outside - informing the public when they were within 100 feet of the polling place, where to park, that cell phones were not allowed and restrooms were not open to the public. We assembled the voting booths. We set up the AutoMARK for use by disabled voters. We assembled and turned on the precinct scanner, noting the “Zero Report” tape which was later shown to the first voter to prove no one had voted as yet.

Just before 7:00 AM the inspector gave the clerks “Election Official” badges, administered the oath to us and we all signed the “Declaration of Election Officers”. We looked outside and saw a line of voters waiting for the 7:00 opening. It was time to unlock the doors and get to work.

At 7:00 AM the inspector declared aloud, “The Polls are Open!” and the line entered the polling place. The Roster of Voters Officer greeted the voter and, after locating the voter’s name and address, asked the voter to sign the roster. Next the Street Index Officer used a red pen to line through the voter’s name, thus indicating that the person voted. The Ballot/Demonstrator Officer then issued the ballots. After marking the ballots, voters take them to the Precinct Scanner for scanning and the Assisting Officer gave them an “I voted” sticker. And so the voting process was ended. Precinct Officers rotate positions throughout the day in order to fill in for one another as needed for meal and bathroom breaks.

At 8:00 PM the inspector declared aloud, “The Polls are Closed!” We reversed all the setting-up procedures, then ran the “Totals Report” tape which indicated the number of ballots scanned during the day. The daunting job at this point was to process the ballots. We unlocked the ballot scanner, removed all the ballots, sorted, counted and stacked them with all cut corners on the top right hand side. We put all write-in ballots in a separate pile. Provisional ballots, surrendered ballots and spoiled ballots must be processed separately, as well. At the end of this very long day we must count unused ballots and hope the tally matches that of the processed ballots. And, to our amazement, ours did.

As we closed the poll on November 4 one member of our team had access to the “outside world” and knew the results of the Presidential Election. He whispered to me “landslide” and tears welled in my eyes. So, even though, I did not see the presidential candidates’ speeches, I joined with the many people who, like Jesse Jackson, shed tears that night. By the way, I arrived home at 10:00 P.M.

LWVSC NATURAL RESOURCES UPDATES

By Rick Bettis

Following are brief updates on some of the more significant current activities and issues in which this writer has been a participant.

Air Quality and Global Warming- Sacramento City and County, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and the Sacramento Metropolitan Area Quality Management District (SMAQMD), and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) are all, pursuing plans and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The California Air Resources Board has completed a Scoping Plan for the implementation of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The Plan consists of dozens of policies that are intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, a reduction of more than 30% from the "business as usual" scenario.

Studies conducted by UC Davis, in cooperation with the SMAQCD and Breathe California, indicate much greater than previously indicated negative effects on the respiratory and cardiovascular systems can result from breathing very fine Particulate Matter. The studies indicate that the use of selected screening vegetation can reduce these effects along high traffic volume roadways and railroads.

American River Parkway – Following a process of nearly four years the American River Parkway Plan has been updated for the first time since 1985. The City and County of Sacramento have approved the updated Plan. It will be soon approved by the City of Rancho Cordova and it will be then submitted to the California State Legislature for final adoption. Legislative adoption is required since the Parkway incorporates State owned lands at Cal Expo.

The Plan is based on the continued management of the Parkway with an emphasis on natural resources protection and passive recreation. Developed recreation areas will be minimized. Acquisition of approximately 330 acres, including a 60 acre abandoned aggregate mine, to be converted to a pond, are planned for the area between Highway 160 and Discovery Park on the North side of the River. Money for restoration is available from the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), however funding has not been identified for land acquisition.

Efforts continue to minimize the visual impact of development of private properties on land adjacent to the Parkway. Proposed developments are being critically scrutinized and, in some cases, opposed; and landscape screening requirements are being reviewed and more assertively implemented.

To provide needed deferred maintenance funding a supplemental property tax assessment is being considered for the properties located within three miles of the River.

Flood Control—SAFCA, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the State of California continue to pursue the implementation of flood control measures on the Sacramento and American Rivers system that will result in a one in 200 return period protection for the Sacramento urban area. Since 75% of the project funding will be from the Federal Government an in-depth review is being performed by the USACE to ensure that all Federal standards are being met, resulting in a delayed completion date to 2012.

Work is being performed on localized levee upgrades and the construction of a new bridge at Folsom Dam and preliminary work on a major new flood control spillway at the Dam.

The USACE is also in the process of finalizing criteria and policies regarding the use of vegetation in connection with flood control levee projects.

SAFCA has also adopted an impact fee on new development within the natural flood plan areas of the Sacramento Area. Funds generated by this fee will be used to further enhance the flood protection, including armoring that prevents erosion if a levee was overtopped. This would substantially reduce property damage for flood events larger than the adopted one in 200 standard.

Transportation—Sacramento Regional Transit (SRT) has completed a series of public workshops for their Transit Master Plan Update. The public has indicated support for a major upgrade in public transit service, however funding remains a major challenge. The desired Scenario C would cost \$7.2 billion to implement and \$560 million for annual operations and maintenance. These costs have been estimated to equal approximately \$800 annually per household in the SRT service area. The SRT internet web site, www.sacrt.com, includes a “Willingness to Pay” game where you can delete projects and programs from Scenario C and receive instant feedback in the form of estimated reduced costs.

The California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) plans to add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to Highway 50 and other freeways. These projects would reserve these lanes for vehicles with two persons or more during peak commute times.

The Highway 50 project has been opposed by a coalition of 14 neighborhood associations and local environmental organizations who are concerned about the impacts on global warming, air quality, neighborhood disruption, and growth inducement. The coalition believes that priority should be given to funding for public transit along the Highway 50 corridor. The coalition prevailed in a lawsuit when the Superior Court ruled that the CALTRANS Environmental Impact Report (EIR) did not comply with the requirements of the California environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and ordered CALTRANS to redo the EIR.

However the Governor is now proposing that projects such as the Highway 50 HOV lanes that are to be funded under Proposition 1B, the transportation bond measure that was passed in 2006, be exempted from the CEQA environmental impact assessment requirements. The Governor believes this would result in jobs thereby providing a needed “Economic Stimulus”. This proposal is opposed by environmental and community organizations and is being debated as part of the State Budget deliberations.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

James Siler

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Emma Gunterman

Virginia Moose

Catherine Troka

Stephen J. Moyer

DECEMBER UNIT MEETINGS

Discussion Topic

LWVSC natural resources updates from Rick Bettis. (See pages 4 and 5.)

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City	Monday, December 8 6:15 PM	Tom Swift 453-8707	5308 Shepard Avenue Sacramento, CA 95819
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, December 9 9:15 A.M.	Mary McCullough 967-7382	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael
Greenhaven/ Land Park	Tuesday, December 9 9:30 AM	Mary Hopkins 422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento
Elk Grove	Tuesday, December 9 1 P.M.	RSVP for holiday get-together to Bill Lee 688-5360	8880 Mackey Road Elk Grove 95624

Eileen Heaser, unit coordinator, 916-456-2154 or eheser@csus.edu

ELECTIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL READINGS

By Eileen Heaser

While the 2008 general election enthusiasm continues, book publishers are issuing many titles of interest. A few are listed below.

Bad for Democracy: How the Presidency Undermines the Power of the People. Nelson, D., 2008. The author argues that the increasing scope and power of the U.S. presidency must be reversed in order to preserve the citizens' practice of self-rule essential to democracy.

Design for Democracy: Ballot and Election Design. Lausen, M., 2007. Guidelines are suggested for improving the clarity of ballots, registration forms, signs, and informational guides and administrative materials.

Electronic Elections: The Perils and Promises of Digital Democracy. Alvarez & Hall, 2008. The authors belong to a group of political and computer scientists who began the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project after the 2000 election. The book summarizes the results of the Project and considers how electronic voting works in comparison to paper systems.

The Hidden Costs of Clean Election Reform. Shaffer, F., 2008. The author, a research associate at MIT's Center for International Studies, discusses a database of "clean election reforms" used in other countries and some from the U.S. He discusses new reform measures that may make the situation worse.

Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World, Foner, E., Editor, 2008. Author discusses effective presidential leadership during crises.

The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns. Hillygus & Shields, 2008. Authors discuss the impact of campaigns on voters, how much weight voters place on individuals versus party affiliations.

Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections. Prior, M., 2007. How do the changes in patterns of news exposure, Internet, cable TV, etc., affect political knowledge, voter participation and turnout?

Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do.

Gelman, Park, Shore, et al. 2008. Columbia University statistician and four former political science students aim to enlighten the general reader on how Americans decide to vote. Income and voting were the two variables used to assess voters' choices.

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln, Kearns-Goodwin, D., 2008. Provides a character study of Lincoln and his cabinet members, many of whom were his rivals, as well, an analysis of Lincoln as politician, leader and manager.

Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief. McPherson, J., 2008. A well regarded historian discusses Lincoln's presidency during a time of war.

**LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard
democracy leads to civic improvement.**



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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DECEMBER 2008

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FIRST-OF-YEAR LEGISLATIVE VISITS

By Tom Swift, Legislative Visit Facilitator

At the beginning of the California Legislature's calendar year, each local League throughout the state has teams usually of four members visit each senator and assemblyperson in their area. In January or February our League will have teams visit Senator Darrell Steinberg, the new senate leader, and Assembly Member Dave Jones, whose districts are entirely within Sacramento County. We will also supply a representative to the teams that interview Senators Dave Cox and Lois Wolk and Assembly Members Joan Buchanan, Alyson Huber, Ted Gaines, and Roger Niello.

Each team's job is to present to their legislator the state League's priority issues for the coming year and to hear her/his view or position on each issue. The state League's Legislative Committee and Trudy Schafer, its lead legislative advocate, provides us with these issues and with details explaining the League's position on each issue. They also provide us with information on how to conduct the interview. We are to present the League's positions, not our own views. We also ask legislators their priorities for the coming year. The team leader takes detailed notes on the legislator's responses and then sends written reports on these to LWVC. These details about each legislator are invaluable for the LWVC team in lobbying for and against bills of importance to the League.

A secondary purpose of the legislative visits is to show our interest in our representatives, their views, and how they vote. Legislators cannot be expected to represent the public if citizens do not make their views known to them.

If you would like to participate in one of these visits contact Tom Swift at (916) 453-8707 or tswift@csus.edu. It is both easy and interesting. I make each appointment, organize by phone calls a team of four League members who are available at that time, and days ahead send each member a copy of the document from the state League which lists and explains the League's priority issues, typically four. We meet at the state capitol 45 minutes before the legislative appointment to review the issues and decide who wishes to take each issue.