



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

MARCH 2011

Dear League Members:

Interesting and interested people

Doing interesting work and

Having interesting dialog...

Does this sound like a group that might interest you?

An experience to remember: demanding, rewarding, challenging, satisfying...join the LWV of Sacramento County Board of Directors to be part of a dynamic, fun group of people.

You will be able to:

- share your League successes with other Leagues,
- build your leadership and other skills,
- learn to use your skills to make things happen for the League and for your community,
- help to set the direction for the LWV of Sacramento County,
- expand your commitment to the League,
- raise your visibility.

If this sounds like an opportunity you or someone you know might want to pursue, please contact Roseanna Torretto, Nominating Committee Chair at torretto@pacbell.net

March is Women's History Month

See <http://www.nwhp.org/whm/history.php>

to learn the history of this observance.

There will be observances all year to commemorate women gaining the right to vote in California and Women's Equality Day in August observing the ratification of the 19th amendment granting all women in the USA the right to vote. Event information will be posted here and on our League website.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting Saturday May 21, 2011, Casa Garden Meeting Center

2010-2011

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Birthday, League of Women Voters of the United States! February 14th, the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) observed the 91st anniversary of our founding. The League was formed to prepare women to vote, but today both men and women turn to the League for non-partisan election information. Our work is as important now as in the past. While the public sees a 24 hour news cycle of electoral ads, little ballot information of substance is communicated. Preparing for the June 2011 statewide election, we ask members to study and discuss League ballot analyses with friends, neighbors and colleagues, and donate to the LWV of Sacramento Education Fund to assist with costs of public voter education materials.

Celebrate 100 Years of California Women Voting

Yes, California women gained the right to vote before women in other states, and it was rural counties that voted strongly for women's suffrage. Watch the Voter for event information.

Sunshine Week Observance

Wednesday, March 23, 2011, starting at 9 a.m., we are co-sponsoring Sunshine Week activities at University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law. Please see pages 4 and 5 for the agenda and registration form. Pre-registration is appreciated by March 15th. With state budget cutbacks threatening the simplest notice of government agency meeting agendas posted to public websites and availability of documents to the public, we need to monitor public agendas, volunteer to serve as Observers, and share meeting information with League members. See the San Jose Mercury News, http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_17394857?source=most_emailed&nclick_check=1. Sunshine Week may be once a year, but League Observers work tirelessly year 'round to stay informed. We hope to see you at McGeorge Law School March 23rd.

Fundraising Event

Save Thursday, May 12th for the League Garden Party! Last year's party at former Mayor Anne Rudin's garden was so popular, and so successful, another is planned for this May. More information will be posted to our website and the next newsletter.

LWVUS Education Study and Privatization Study Plans

You recall the LWVUS convention last June authorized two studies, one of the federal role in education and the second a study of privatization. The education study committee will be meeting this week. We are happy to announce Muriel Strand was appointed to the LWVUS national privatization study committee. See her earliest report on page 8.

Sacramento City Redistricting Public Meetings

Miranda Perry

A spotlight has been cast upon processes used to redraw legislative districts since the passage of Propositions 11 and 20. Public opinion now demands that redistricting be completed with sufficient transparency, representation and public input. Now it is time to engage in redistricting right here in Sacramento.

Drawing district lines became a responsibility of the City Council following the 1978 charter change which mandated council members are elected from districts, rather than at-large. Every ten years, after the census, our city districts need to be reapportioned to ensure the “One Person, One Vote” rule.

On February 8, in an effort to accomplish reapportionment for this decade, the City established a Redistricting Citizens Advisory Committee to, “review, organize, analyze, and refine the redistricting proposals submitted to the City, as well as to recommend to the City Council preferred redistricting proposals.” This committee will be comprised of thirteen members that represent the “demographic diversity” (gender, race, age, income, language, education, occupation) of the City. Each councilmember, and the mayor, will appoint a member to the committee. The last four members will be appointed through a nomination process. The ultimate responsibility of determining new district lines is held by the Council – but the process is open to public input.

Public participation is important because drawing district lines creates the “basis for the allocation of political power.” Robust participation also helps to keep the process fair and transparent, to insure community interests are heard and represented.

During February, the City staff’s Redistricting Team was engaged in community education and outreach efforts, holding redistricting forums throughout the area. One of these forums was held on February 9 at the Pannell Community Center. A presentation was given by Scot Mende, New Growth Manager, and Maria MacGunigal, IT/GIS Manager. They were supported by Vincene Jones of Neighborhood Services Division, and Matt Ruyak, Deputy City Attorney. The purpose of the forum was to explain the process and importance of redistricting, and provided rationale for community involvement.

There is ample opportunity for participation in the City’s redistricting process. In addition to the educational forums that took place during February, all of the Redistricting Citizens Advisory Committee meetings will be held in accordance with the Brown Act and will be open to the public. Lastly, the City is providing an online tool that allows members of the public to create their own district maps using the current census data. These citizens’ proposals can be submitted to the City to be considered by the Advisory Committee and Council.

Cited sources: <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/redistricting/>

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Compton
Madeleine Robinson
Karen F. Taranto
Ebony Walters



Sacramento 2011 Sunshine Week Program: The Road Forward on Open Government

Sponsored by

Northern California Association of Law Libraries (NOCALL)

California Library Association (CLA)

California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners (CALTAC)

Sacramento League of Women Voters

Special Library Association/Sierra-Nevada Region (SLA)

When: Wednesday, March 23, 2011, 9:00-1:30
Where: Pacific McGeorge School of Law, Classroom D
 3285 Fifth Avenue (The N.W. corner of 5th Ave. and 33rd Street)
 Sacramento, CA 95817

Agenda: 9:00 - 9:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast
 9:30 – 11:00 National Sunshine Week Web Cast
 11:00 – 11:30 Break
 11:30 – 1:30 Lunchtime Panel of Local Speakers

Sunshine Week is a national initiative spearheaded by the American Society of News Editors about the importance of open government and the freedom of information. The event kicks off with the viewing of the national Sunshine Week 2011 Web Cast – **The Road Forward on Open Government** from Washington, D.C.

Part I: National Web Cast, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

President Obama committed his administration to an unprecedented openness in government. Toward this end, the administration issued a number of policy changes, including a Memorandum of Freedom of Information Act, a new Executive Order (EO) on Classified National Security and an EO on Controlled Unclassified Information. Two panels of transparency experts from inside and outside government will discuss how the administration's initiatives are being put into practice -- from both a policy and a technical standpoint -- and what more we can and should expect the Administration to do to meet its goal

- The first panel will cover the policy aspects of the Administration's Open Government Initiative. Invited panelists include David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, Steven P. Croley, Special Assistant to the President for Justice and Regulatory Policy, and Gary Bass, Executive Director, OMB Watch.
- Speakers on the second panel will discuss the effect technology has on the way people get and use information, how the government is trying to fill that need, and the strengths and limitations of the Administration's approach. Open-TheGovernment.Org will soon announce the panelists.

(There will be a break from 11:00 – 11:30)

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Part II: Lunchtime Local Panelists. 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Thomas W. Newton is the general counsel and legislative advocate for the California Newspaper Publishers Association (CNPA). As principal spokesman for the CPNA, Mr. Newton regularly presents testimony before legislative committees, as well as other state boards and commissions. He oversees CNPA's professional lobbyists on a number of issues, including those relating to the First Amendment and freedom of information. Mr. Newton is an editor of The Reporter's Handbook on Media Law, and he has collaborated on various publications and articles, including Open and Public - A User's Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act (Editions I, II and III) and Summary: California Public Records Act. A graduate of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law, Mr. Newton is the two-time winner of the James Madison Freedom of Information Award and a recipient of the Bill Farr Freedom of Information Award.

John Cary Sims is professor of law at Pacific McGeorge School of Law, teaching courses on subjects that include Constitutional Law, National Security Law, International Protection of Human Rights, and Professional Responsibility. His extensive scholarship and invited presentations reflect his expertise in the principles furthered by the Sunshine Week initiative. Professor Sims graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School, where he served as a member of the Harvard Law Review Board of Editors. Before turning to teaching, he was an attorney for 10 years at the Public Citizen Litigation Group in Washington, D.C., handling a wide range of complex cases at all levels of the state and federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States. Professor Sims is a founding Co-Editor-in Chief of the Journal of National Security Law and Policy, a peer-reviewed law review devoted to the broad range of issues related to national defense.

Registration

Please register by March 15, 2011. Registration Fee: \$20.00 per person (\$25.00 at the door) Students: \$15.00 per student (\$20.00 at the door). Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be served. Parking is free. Link to campus map & Parking Areas A-J at <http://www.mcgeorge.edu/x436.xml>. **Classroom D** is location 9 on the map.

To pay with a credit card by PayPal, link to: <http://units.sla.org/chapter/csrn/events.html>. If you prefer to pay by check, send the following form with your check to the address below (**make the check payable to the Special Library Association**) and confirm that you sent both to **bj.combs@comcast.net**

-----Register by mail by sending this portion with your check to-----

Billy Jack "B.J." Combs, 4101 Mindt Court, Carmichael, CA 95608

Name _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

Employer/Affiliation _____

Please check appropriate organization:

___ CLA Member ___ CALTAC Member ___ League of Women Voters

___ NOCALL Member ___ SLA Member ___ Student ___ Other

Update: CA Implementation, Health Care Reform

Alice Ginosar
Suburban Unit Chair

“From Reform to Reality: Building better systems of care in CA” 15th Annual Conference on Insuring the Uninsured, Sacramento February 2, 2011

The primary focus of this comprehensive annual conference on Insuring the Uninsured Project (ITUP) was to inform the 400 plus participants about California’s implementation plans for the new federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010. Most attention was on implementation of California’s Health Benefit Exchange(E).

According to Lucien Wulsin, CEO, ITUP, the passage of federal health reform brings unprecedented opportunity to foster key improvements in the health insurance system. At the core of this work is the emergence of state-based health insurance exchanges, where individuals and small businesses will be able to receive tax subsidies in order to purchase affordable health insurance. The exchanges (E) will contain new consumer protections that health plans must incorporate in order to participate in the new market. The E has the possibility to become a transformative source of quality affordable health care for individual, small, and even large group markets.

Rick Kronick, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services said our joint task is to eliminate the fear of citizens as we make the transition to the E by 2014. It will be hard work changing our huge health care system; the task of the federal government is to provide information, guidance and resources to all states to make the E high quality, easily accessible and market competitive.

Sumi Sousa, Special Assistant to the Speaker of the California State Assembly spoke passionately about insuring that the E is flexible, has a solid foundation, and is “what the people want” and need. By 2014, she wants to see the E become competitive with insurance companies such as Blue Shield.

Jon Kingsdale, CEO of Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority in Massachusetts, counseled California to enroll the young and healthy in the E by 2013 to avoid “adverse selection” that will increase the cost. In MA they had a massive community and civic effort to enroll people using faith based groups, sports teams, local business, including ads on the back of McDonalds’ receipts. He wished California well.

David Panush, Health Consultant to Senator Pro Tem Steinberg spoke as part of a panel. He spoke about the hard task of implementing the E during challenging budget years. He said in his experience it is “unprecedented” that Democrats have found it necessary to propose \$12.5 billion in cuts to services. He said it may take 10 years to stabilize California’s budget.

Lucian Wulsin, ITUP Project Director, facilitating this panel, said there will be many very hard decisions to make in setting up the E. There are questions, such as what will happen to Healthy Families and the Child Health Disability Prevention Program. Will they continue as is, or be included in the E? Others on the panel said the E will have a huge fiscal impact and that CA is making a major fiscal commitment in moving forward to implement it.

The key to success: the Exchange must provide easy, simple ACCESS to enroll.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Jean Ross, Executive Director of the CA Budget Project, said that we all must educate the public about health care reform, the new federal law (the ACA) and the E. She praised Governor Brown's proposed budget as being the most balanced and transparent in years. According to Ms. Ross, it is NOT alarmist to say that if CA savings and/or revenues do not go up, then "people will die". Also, the number of children who are homeless will increase and the elderly without home health care will increase and some will die.

Waivers: Waivers from the federal government give all states permission to "experiment" to make their programs more efficient and effective. Right now grants are available to assist that development. The process of seeking waivers is too detailed and complex to describe in this article. Lucien Wulsin, ITUP has written extensively on the health care reform now happening in CA. For more information see: www.itup.org and www.dhcs.ca.gov

In summary, Diana Dooley, Secretary CA Health & Human Services Agency is committed to getting the E up and running. She said there is no future for the E without a stable budget and that the budget is "stunningly sobering", putting even those with insurance at risk. As the budget is resolved, her agency will be committed to educate the public about the benefits of E. At present, it appears the CA Exchange is being developed by very committed people; I recommend the LWV monitor the implementation.

MARCH UNIT MEETINGS

March Unit meetings will discuss redistricting. See the League of Women Voters of California website at <http://cavotes.org/issues/redistricting-implementation> to review basics about implementation of the Voters First Act and the Voters First for Congress Act. Unit Coordinator, Eileen Heaser will send educational materials to Unit Chairpersons. Please invite friends, co-workers and neighbors to Unit meetings.

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City	Monday, March 7 6:15 PM	Tom Swift 453-8707	5308 Shepard Ave. Sacramento 95819
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, March 8 9:15 AM	Alice Ginosar 863-7741	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael 95608
Greenhaven/ Land Park	Tuesday, March 8 10:00 AM	Mary Hopkins 422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento 95831
Elk Grove	Tuesday, March 8 1:00 PM	Bill & Elaine Lee 688-5360	8622 Shasta Lily Drive Elk Grove 95624

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



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MARCH 2011

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Update: National League Privatization Study

Muriel Strand, Member LWVUS Study Committee

At last year's National Convention, popular sentiment among delegates coalesced around a proposal from the floor for a national privatization study. A longtime interest in economics, and in functionality and sustainability, led this writer to apply to participate in this national study, and I was honored to be selected. Two Seattle LWV studies, of public/private partnerships in 2001, and of privatization in 2009, preceded and energized the vote to expand the issue to the national level. Two key texts considered in the 2009 Seattle study are the 1987 report of Reagan's Commission on Privatization favoring privatization, and a 1988 Yale Law Review critique of the practice.

Privatization trends in recent decades can be seen as a reaction to the Progressive Era of the early 20th century which envisioned a stronger role for government in the welfare of citizens. More recently, Milton Friedman among others advocated assumptions about undue growth in government spending in democracies, and superior efficiencies from the flexibility available to private as opposed to public enterprises. However, critics counter that obsession with profits can easily lead to mission creep or even corruption, while the government's necessary role in accountability, oversight and evaluation may end up reducing overall efficiency. The result on the ground is a continuum between traditional 'pure' government agencies and the private sector that is populated by more and more hybrids with varying proportions of public and private characteristics.

Currently, the study team is researching and developing a recommendation for the scope of the study, which will be considered by the national board in April. The team will then complete the research and develop the consensus questions, which are to be approved by the board in October. Consideration by local Leagues is scheduled for December 2011 through April 2012.