



California VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

NOVEMBER 2004

JILL KAISER NEWCOM IS OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am very pleased to announce to you that the League of Women Voters of California finally has an executive director, and to extend an official welcome to her as she assumes this position in our organization. Jill Kaiser Newcom, who began work in the state office on October 1, was the outstanding candidate in an extensive search by the personnel committee. We were all impressed with her enthusiasm and positive attitude about the work of the League and with her vision for what we can accomplish together.

Jill is delighted to be returning to Sacramento as Executive Director for the League of Women Voters of California. Born in Chicago, raised in Atlanta, Jill calls the State of California her true home. She moved to Sacramento in 1997, but left in June 2003 to take a self-guided trip through South America. After a year of learning Spanish, trekking through glorious Andean countryside, and exploring the rich history of this diverse southern continent, Jill is ready to focus her attentions on California issues.

Prior to her tour of South America, Jill was Executive Director of the Arts and Business Council of Sacramento. Enriching quality of life through arts and business partnerships is the mission of the Arts and Business Council. Jill is credited with leading that nonprofit organization through a period of tremendous growth that significantly broadened its mission, added and revitalized programs and established the Arts and Business Council as a key resource for arts-related issues in the Sacramento region.

Jill also served as Vice President of Community Development at the Sacramento Metro Chamber from 1998 to 2003, where she developed innovative new membership benefits, solidified the Metro Chamber's interest in the arts as a community development tool through the Regional Arts Initiative, and helped to produce such well-known events as Perspectives.

Before joining the Sacramento Metro Chamber, Jill was a State of California Executive Fellow at the California Arts Council.

Jill earned a BA in Political Economy and Philosophy from Newcomb College of Tulane University, one of the few remaining women's coordinate colleges in the United States. During her studies at Tulane University, she was elected President of the Associated Student Body, making her only the third woman in the school's history to hold that position. She also possesses an MSc in Public Administration and Public Policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She became a Harry S. Truman Scholar, thereby committing herself to a career in the public service, in the spring of 1993.

It goes without saying that Jill enjoys travel. But she also enjoys reading, backpacking, snowboarding and playing chess. She is an active volunteer in the Sacramento community, lending her time and energies to animal welfare groups and arts organizations. Jill is an alumna of Leadership Sacramento and a spirited advocate for the Sacramento region and the Golden State.

This marks a new beginning for the LWVC, made possible by your cooperation

and willingness to support your state organization. I hope that you will have a chance to meet Jill personally and will make her feel welcome. Jill's e-mail address is jnewcom@lwvc.org

Jackie Jacobberger
President

LWVC WINS SOME, LOSES SOME: GOVERNOR DECIDES

We are always pleased when bills that the LWVC supports are signed into law. At the end of September the Governor **signed** bills supported by the League which will

- change the date of the California primary election from March to June (SB 1730)
- put library bonds on the ballot in November 2006 (SB 1161)
- define, for solar water heating systems and photovoltaic systems, what constitutes a "significant" increase in cost or decrease in efficiency, to prevent local agencies from putting up unreasonable barriers to their installation (AB 2473)
- require child welfare agencies to attempt to keep teen parents in foster care and their children together as a unit, and to provide them with services designed to strengthen the parent-child bond and the minor parent's ability to provide a permanent and safe home for the child (SB 1178)
- establish requirements that must be met by nonpublic schools which provide special education to foster youth who live in licensed institutions and foster family homes (AB 1858)
- revise the process for allocating shares of the regional housing need to cities, counties, and subregions for all income levels and implement consensus-based changes proposed by the Housing Element Work Group (AB 2158)

- prohibit cruise ships from incinerating wastes onboard within three miles of the California coast (AB 471)
- phase in water meters in Sacramento, Lake Tahoe and other areas which have never had water meters (AB 2572)
- add to the requirements for an Urban Water Management Plan adopted by an urban water supplier by requiring the plan to describe the opportunities for development of desalinated water as a long-term supply (SB 318).

The League is disappointed that the Governor **vetoed** several bills that we had hoped would make a difference and improve government in California. These vetoed bills would have

- required improved review of tax expenditures, as that would be helpful in the annual budget process (AB 2106). Our call to action on the California Tax Expenditure Accountability Act is on the LWVC Web site, http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/perf_review
- allowed a pupil serving as a poll worker to be included in computing a school's average daily attendance (AB 1944). This bill was meant to encourage qualified high school students to serve as poll workers.
- permitted purchase of prescription drugs from Canada by the Department of General Services and the Medi-Cal and AIDS Drugs Assistance programs at reduced prices, required a review of potential savings by state agencies, and established Web sites to advise purchase of pharmaceuticals from Canada (SB 1144, SB 1333, and AB 1957). The Governor promises to make a legislative proposal on the issue in January.
- allowed CalPERS to take part in a prescription drug purchasing consortium with other private or public entities (AB 1958)
- restricted local governments' ability to deny or place restrictions on the development of second unit housing (AB 2702). We wel-

came the proposed standards for second unit ordinances; the Governor felt they took away too much local control.

- protected the rights of students to have a parent present when they are formally questioned by a peace officer at school (AB 1012). The Governor thought the provisions were too broad.

Marion Taylor

Legislation Director

MORE DEBATE NEEDED ON PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT REFORM

The opening round of Governor Schwarzenegger's push to "fix" California ended Sept. 27 when the last public hearing was held on a massive report from a commission appointed to review every corner of state government.

Called the California Performance Review (CPR), the report presents more than 1,000 recommendations to resuscitate—or reform—California by restructuring, reorganizing and reforming state government into a more efficient and economical operation.

Now the League of Women Voters of California and others are assailing the report and calling for another round of public hearings on the CPR before the governor takes action to implement the recommendations. Critics argue that the report needs far more scrutiny and discussion by the legislature and the public.

In a letter to the commission, League president Jackie Jacobberger says, "We are particularly concerned that the work of the commission was done behind closed doors and, in many areas, without the involvement of individuals and groups who should have been consulted."

She points out that the Legislative Analyst's Office has said that even if all the recommendations were implemented, they would not

come close to solving the state's structural deficit, meaning that that California would continue to find it difficult to balance its budget. Part of the problem is the CPR has grossly overestimated savings and revenues and underestimated implementation costs.

Jacobberger in her letter goes on to identify other problems:

1. fiscal problems of tax credits under the Manufacturer's Investment Credit if it is reinstated
2. need for greater sensitivity to the community college system
3. the conflict with both present law and Prop 1A, the local funding measure on the November ballot
4. the unwieldiness of 11 proposed "mega-agencies" and the loss of public forums

Jacobberger concludes: "It is imperative that a more open deliberative process be put in place if anything constructive is to come out of this effort."

More complete information on the CPR is available on the LWVC website at http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/perf_review

Marion Taylor

Legislation Director

LWVC CONVENTION

It's a New World

May 20-22, 2005

Garden Grove

Hosted by Orange County Leagues

- Decide 2005-07 Program & Priorities
- Attend Workshops
- Hear Exciting Speakers
- Have Fun

California VOTER
November 2004
President: Jacqueline Jacobberger
Editor: Lynda Hungerford

About the League:

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League has two separate and distinct roles. The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund, which conducts our voters service and citizen education activities, is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonprofit educational organization. The League of Women Voters of California, a membership organization, conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) corporation.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

League invites your comments, letters, articles, and book reviews. They may be sent to the State Office.

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WATER PRIVATIZATION CHECKLIST OK'D

In May of 2003 the LWVC Convention passed a resolution calling on the LWVC Board to look at state League water positions in light of the current trend toward the privatization of water utility functions.

Jack Sullivan coordinated efforts by Polly Smith, Roberta Borgonovo (LWVC water consultants), and Diane Park (San Joaquin County League) to develop an approach to respond to original resolution.

This group developed a "Water Privatization Checklist" for use by local Leagues in evaluating local water privatization proposals. The checklist draws on existing state and national League positions and provides a mechanism by which local Leagues can decide to take a position for or against a water privatization proposal.

After considerable discussion by the state Board, and input from a number of Board members, the LWVC Board approved the checklist at its meeting on September 12, 2004. The checklist appeared in the October UPDATE, a copy of which is sent to every League, and local League boards are free to begin using it immediately.

League members who want to see the checklist should ask their local League president for a copy or for instructions on how to view the October UPDATE on the member side of the League Web site. League boards or individual members who have questions about the checklist should direct them to me.

Jack Sullivan

Natural Resources Director
natural_resources@lwvc.org

Democracy Dinner

April 22, 2005

San Jose

Gala Benefit for the Education Fund Featuring
Nancy Soderberg, Former Ambassador to the UN
&
Silent Auction

LET'S DEBATE ABOUT DEBATES: WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

Greetings from the Education Fund! I want to update you on the senatorial debate that was held on August 10 in Los Angeles between Bill Jones and Barbara Boxer. The event was broadcast on KNBC in Southern California and on some other NBC affiliates but, unfortunately, not everyone in the state got to see it.

The debate went off well, with Paul Moyer moderating and three news people asking questions of the candidates. The League provided timers and was mentioned a number of times during the broadcast. We had been hoping to do an on-air welcome but scheduling constraints made that impossible.

The larger question surrounding this debate was the issue of criteria for candidate participation - including receiving at least 10% in an independent poll.

This year, the League was sued by the Libertarian Party's candidate (Judge Gray), who had received 3%. Thanks to the pro bono efforts of a Los Angeles attorney, the suit was dismissed, but the issue still remains.

Many California League members strongly support inviting all candidates who appear on the ballot to participate. Others just as strongly want the League to be a visible leader in organizing statewide debates. Unfortunately, these goals may be mutually exclusive since major party candidates generally decline to appear with those from a minor party.

What to do? The LWVCEF board feels it needs more definitive input from local League members. We are considering holding a referendum at the 2005 League Convention next May, taking the result as Direction to the Board. After studying a Pro & Con document, delegates could vote on a number of options for League sponsorship of statewide candidate

forums. We are also thinking about making this a demonstration of Instant Runoff Voting and perhaps even getting one of the touch screen vendors to demonstrate it on their technology.

Debates and forums are historically one of the cornerstones of League involvement in elections. We want to make sure that we're providing an opportunity that's fair to all candidates while providing voters with the greatest possible amount of useful information. We also — just as importantly — want to be responsive to the beliefs of our members.

Robbie Davis

Education Fund Chair

SMART VOTER LEVELS ELECTION PLAYING FIELD THROUGH WEB



November 2004 will be the 39th election held since the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund took over the Smart Voter project,

<http://smartvoter.org>, in November of 1997.

Since that time the project has expanded and grown. In 1997 Smart Voter covered only two counties. Today 24 California counties and part of Ohio participate. We are pleased to welcome the most recent addition to the Smart Voter family — LWV Mendocino County.

Voters throughout California will go to the polls on November 2 and increasing numbers of them will turn to Smart Voter for the information they need to help them make decisions. League volunteers solicited Smart Voter participation from over 4,000 candidates for state, city,

county, and school district offices, as well as for special district offices with jurisdiction over public services such as water, irrigation, libraries, parks and recreation.

Californians will vote yes or no on many ballot issues that will affect our communities for years to come. Extensive resources such as Pros & Cons and Cal-Access campaign finance information are at voters' fingertips on Smart Voter state proposition pages.

For many years, the League of Women Voters has been passionately committed to campaign finance reform. This commitment often takes the form of action in favor of regulatory legislation or ballot measures, but sometimes it has simply involved "leveling the playing field" so that candidates without great wealth can mount effective campaigns for public office.

Smart Voter offers free space on the Internet to candidates at all levels of government. Candidate information is then made easily available to voters who access it, based on their home addresses. This service is particularly beneficial for local elections, which rarely receive the press coverage given to national and statewide contests.

"If we are to ever overcome the effects of massive political contributions, it will be organizations like yours, providing objective information to the voters, who lead the reform," commented one Sonoma County Smart Voter user.

A San Diego County user wrote, "Awesome site. It was a real help casting my ballot for the provincial issues. A one stop shop to get all the candidate links. Thank you."

Smart Voter also offers you the ability to access candidate and ballot issue information going back to November 1997. Simply go to <http://www.smartvoter.org> and look for "archives."

Trudell Een
Project Director
Smart Voter

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HAVA FUNDING?

After Secretary of State Kevin Shelley spoke to us at May Leadership Council, many of us were very excited about an opportunity to submit grant requests to fund new, exciting voter outreach projects. Eleven Leagues submitted requests that became part of over 300 grant requests from community organizations submitted to the Secretary of State. All of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds for these grant requests are frozen.

Most news coverage of the freezing of the HAVA funds has been quite general and most of the information consists of charges against the Secretary of State for improper use of the HAVA funds.

Most newspapers did not explain what effect the freezing of a large portion of the HAVA funds would have on voter outreach projects. Leagues were sent an action alert requesting emails and faxes to the Governor, Department of Finance and the Secretary of State to release funding for the Easy Voter Guides.

Common Knowledge Inc., the producers of the Easy Voter Guide, made the decision to print over 1.1 million copies of the Guide in five languages. They had requests for 2 million but

With regret we learned of the death of **Ruth Weston Scheer**, who served on the board of the League of Women Voters of California for six years and who was president of the LWVC from 1945 to 1949. She also served as president of the LWV Berkeley for two terms.

did not have the \$300,000 promised them by the Secretary of State. Those funds were to cover all the development costs and a portion of the printing. The limited printing was funded from grants from the CA Libraries and the Irvine Foundation. Common Knowledge, in order to meet its obligations, still needs funding from the Secretary of State for the development costs. As of this writing, there is still hope that the Department of Finance and the legislature will release the funds.

The situation was aptly summed up in a September 16 editorial in the Sacramento Bee:

“As we have noted before, there is plenty to investigate about the way Secretary of State Kevin Shelley handles his duties and operates his office. But that investigation should not interfere with the proper operation of the Nov. 2 election. ... Allowing an investigation of Shelley to get in the way of needed voter education materials turns common sense on its head.”

Nikki Harris

Co-Voters Service Director

Thank You

We did it! *In Depth* and *Pros & Cons* were delivered on schedule.

A very big thank you to the writing team: Marge Blackwell, Thea Brodtkin, Chris Carson, Betty Davenport, Mary Dodd, Jacqueline Knowles, Anne Layzer, Carole Levenson, Joanne McKray, Jonnie Stahl, Ellen Taylor, and Carol Woronow.

The editing team worked just as hard and a grateful thanks to Beth Bhatnagar, Robbie Davis, Jackie Jacobberger, and Patricia Murray from the overwhelmed project manager, Nikki Harris.

PROS & CONS OF *PROS & CONS*: HAS IT BEEN SUPERSEDED?

Now that the *Pros & Cons* are out and the election is almost here, it is time to think about the future. Specifically, I would like to **begin** a dialogue on the future of the *Pros & Cons*.

This publication requires hundreds of hours of volunteer time. Although the publication does earn a small amount of money for the Education Fund, is producing it the best use of League volunteer time?

We have been producing the *Pros & Cons* for many years. Over the last ten years a number of things have changed.

First, the Legislative Analyst (LAO) has been doing a great job of explaining the ballot measures. In fact, the *In Depth* now prints verbatim the LAO version of the Background, the Proposal, and the Fiscal Effects. Our writers select and try to balance the best arguments for and against each measure. They do not verify the accuracy of the arguments.

Second, the *Easy Voter Guide* offers another source for ballot information. This guide simplifies the ballot and is available in five languages. For the last few elections it was free to the League and non-profit organizations. Many Leagues are using the *Easy Voter Guide* instead of *Pros & Cons* for voter education.

Third, the orders for *Pros and Cons* have decreased. Less than 150,000 were produced for this election.

The arguments for continuing to produce the *Pros & Cons* center on the League being known for producing this balanced publication. League members and the public depend on it.

Please let me know your thoughts.

Nikki Harris

Co-Voters Service Director

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LEAGUE WRESTLES WITH OUTREACH—A SMACKDOWN

My computer wallpaper is a picture of the LWV Sacramento's SMACK-DOWN event to remind me of what can happen when you reach out into the community.

The Smackdown Your Vote! Coalition is a partnership of organizations that takes a nonpartisan approach to engage young people in the political process and to get them to register to vote. World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. (WWE), the leader of this coalition, takes an active role in promoting voter education efforts.

As League coordinator I realized that not many Leaguers would be interested in a WWE main event, and so I reached out to my non-League contacts. One was Debbie Richardson, a woman whom I met in a non-election year registration drive. She brought most of the youth, who were tempted by free tickets. They also brought wrestling belts so we fit in with the crowd.

I met our most successful participant at a Filipino Youth Leadership Conference where I honored a last minute request for a speaker. Another responded to my begging at a Rock the Vote Meet Up.

Their energy was contagious and opened my eyes to a community. The wrestling fans

weren't all young white males. They were both ethnically and politically diverse. Some were very poor; one even needed help with a mouse to scan Web sites on the computer on the equipment bus because he had never used a computer



Smackdown Your Vote! volunteers at the World Wrestling Entertainment event in Sacramento. The volunteers 5th and 8th from the left display wrestling belts.

before. These are the people the League should be serving because they are the most unrepresented. The Sacramento League in coalition with other community members registered 25 voters at our SMACK-DOWN event and we distributed all of our freebies.

When SMACKDOWN comes back at the end of January 2005, I hope to be back out there running the line again. But this time I'll bring my own wrestling belt.

Hazel Bergtholdt
LWV Sacramento

Please Join

Information is available on our
Web site

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/membership>