



Channel VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Serving South Santa Barbara County

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Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY FORUM SOCIAL POLICY IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 12:15 to 2 p.m.

Louise Lowry Davis Community Center - De La Vina & Victoria Streets

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The Social Policy position of the national League of Women Voters states (in brief): “Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.”

As we face the worst recession since the 1930s how will the most vulnerable members of our community be affected? Our panel will consider the impacts of the economy on various groups including the young, the disabled, the elderly, and low income renters. It will ask the question: how can we “support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency” as governmental and nonprofit budgets are affected by economic decline?

Panel members will include: **Ann Dietrich**, Director of Santa Barbara County’s Alcohol,

Drug & Mental Health Services; **Kathy Gallaher**, Director of Santa Barbara County’s Department of Social Services; **Roger Heroux**, Executive Director, Bringing Our Community Home; **Lynn Karlson**, Executive Director, Youth and Family Services Branch, The Channel Islands YMCA, and **Belen Seara**, Executive Director, People United For Economic Justice Building Leadership Through Organizing (PUEBLO). **Toni Schultheis**, LWVSB’s Social Policy Director, will moderate.

Also, find out about various city, county, and non-profit organizations that are active in our community, and how you can participate as an observer or advocate.

Emily Allen, Social Policy Committee

FEBRUARY DISCUSSION UNITS VOTING: A RIGHT THAT CAN’T BE IGNORED

Voting rights are at the very core of the League of Women Voters. After all, without women being granted the right to vote there would be no League. As a point of fact, suffragettes fought stringently for the right of African-Americans to vote as well as their own right to vote, thus intertwining women's history with voting rights.

February's units focus on the rich history of voting rights within both the League of Women Voters U.S. and the State League. Come find out how and why the League has fought for equal access to voting information for all, including providing voting materials in lan-

guages other than English. Discuss the current LWVUS priority issue of DC Voting Rights. Discover how the League's position covers a paper trail with which to verify a citizen's vote, an important topic during this age of computerized voting. And last, but not least, be prepared to leave with a renewed sense of why your own right to vote cannot be ignored.

Please join us during one of the February units (see calendar on back page for dates, times, and places).

Stacy Shepherd
3rd Vice President (Community Education)

From the President's Desk...

It's a New Year

My senior year in high school, back in Kentucky, our school was desegregated. Note the negative term instead of the positive "integrated." Only one of the four hopeful African American students - coming from schools that were separate but definitely not equal - lasted the entire year. As I was growing up, white drinking fountains were cooled; "colored" drinking fountains weren't. The seats in the white section of Southern Railroad cars were padded, instead of hard wooden benches. Surely our black residents knew all about that - after all, their section of town was right next to the railroad tracks. My family's home, on land once owned by Henry Clay, had a whites-only deed covenant. When I was married there in 1963, we had to sign the



"white" license book; there was also a "colored" book, but Barack Obama's parents would have been refused a marriage license.

Today, President Obama lives in the White House. The T-shirt from Santa Barbara's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration - which our League co-sponsored - reads "In 2009, we are experiencing the dream." The work isn't over yet - perhaps it never will be - but regardless of whom you supported in the election, I hope you were as inspired as I was by the tone set on Inauguration Day, by the spirit that permeated the massive crowd, and by our new President's inauguration speech, which alluded to many priorities that are also those of LWV.

Linda Phillips, President



MLK March - Linda Phillips, Beth Pitton-August, and Dianne Channing carried the League's name in this year's Martin Luther King Day March. Debra Slaght (hidden behind Linda) and other Leaguers also took part.

FORUM ON GLOBAL WATER: SAVE THE DATE

Thirst for Security: Global Water and Tomorrow's Armed Conflicts will be the topic of a forum presented by the Santa Barbara City College Adult Education Program and the Coalition for Global Dialogue, of which the League is a member. Speakers will include: Richard Connor, UNESCO World Water Assessment Program Consultant; UCSB Distinguished Visiting Professor Hilal Elver, an internationally known water expert and specialist in environmental law and human rights; and Professor Jeff Dozier, founding dean of UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science and a specialist in snow hydrology. This event will take place on Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at SBCC.

CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL LEAGUE'S 89TH BIRTHDAY ON FEBRUARY 14, 2009

I am bursting with pride as I announce that the National League of Women Voters will be celebrating its 89th birthday on February 14, 2009! Thanks to the continued support of generations of incredible volunteers like you, the League has made a measurable impact in communities across the country.

As a member of the League, my wish is simple: that we continue the vital push for changes that make our democracy stronger and work for all people. I know this is one wish sure to come true with friends like you.

Carmela Galvez, Public Relations/Community Service Director

The Channel Voter is published eight times a year, monthly except for January, June, July, and August, by the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters, 328A E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

LEAGUE: CITIZENS WELCOME "NEW ERA OF RESPONSIBILITY"

Washington, DC – League of Women Voters President Mary G. Wilson today congratulated President Barack Obama on his inauguration as the 44th President of the United States.

“This is a historic moment for our nation's democracy, inaugurating America's first African-American president,” said Wilson. “Last year's election was also an impressive example of the kind of widespread involvement of citizens that makes our democracy strong.”

“President Obama's address included an important call to action for citizens, telling America: 'We are in a new era of responsibility.'” Wilson said. “The League is ready to help citizens answer this call, stay engaged with their government, and hold their elected officials accountable.”

“Numerous times, President Obama has signaled his intention to continue to reach out and include the power of citizens in governing this country,” Wilson stated. “Americans are hopeful and energized about the potential of the Obama Administration. They are ready

to be involved with their government and make a difference.”

“And citizens deserve a government that is open about how they will govern and the direction of their policies,” Wilson said. “President Obama has set the right tone in his first address to the nation pledging to 'do our business in the light of day.'”

“But now that the inaugural celebrations are over – it's time to get to work. The League's network of citizens is ready to step up and address the issues that are important nationwide,” stated Wilson. “The League is asking citizens to weigh in on the most important issues for the new Administration to focus on and displaying the results at www.lwv.org.”

“The issues that our country confronts cannot be resolved by just the new administration, the Congress and our elected officials,” concluded Wilson. “Instead, it will take the full and active participation of many voices to make lasting change in 2009 and beyond.”

LWVUS RECEPTION HONORS NEW WOMEN MEMBERS OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On January 6, 75 guests gathered for a historic reception on Capitol Hill to honor the newly sworn-in class of 11 women joining the 111th Congress. The event was co-sponsored by the LWVUS and Rachel's Network, a bipartisan organization that promotes women as impassioned leaders and agents of change dedicated to the stewardship of the earth. In attendance were Congresswomen from both parties, including Lois Capps (CA), Susan Davis (CA), and Lynn Woolsey (CA), as well as prominent leaders from the nonprofit and advocacy communities. This was an inspiring and exciting event for LWV to be a part of and it was energizing to hear so many elected officials praise the League and its work. Several of the members noted that they got their start in public service through the League of Women Voters.



December Holiday Luncheon

The December Holiday Luncheon is a wonderful time to enjoy the company of fellow League members as well as local leaders in the community. This year, the League was delighted to have elected school boards officials and members of the Santa Barbara Youth Council as guests of honor at the Luncheon. Long-time LWVSB Education Fund volunteer, Peg Martin, was also recognized for her valuable contributions as she steps down from the Ed Fund Board. Our deepest thanks goes out to all the volunteers who made the luncheon possible.

A NEW LEAGUE STUDY ON ELECTING THE PRESIDENT BEGINS

The local League is just beginning a study of the National Popular Vote Compact proposal. There clearly is a lack of respect for the Electoral College. The League of Women Voters of the United States has had a position supporting direct election of the President since 1970, with revisions to strengthen it in 2004. Studies show that 70 percent of Americans favor the election of the President by popular vote. The Electoral College has weathered more than 700 constitutional amendments proposed to abolish or alter it. All have failed.

Now there is a new proposal called the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact), as a way to change how the President is elected without having to amend the Constitution. LWVUS has asked Leagues around the country to study this proposal and develop a League position on it.

The first meetings of the local committee to study the National Popular Vote Compact were held in January. The group chose co-chairs Claire Van Blaricum and Connie Hannah to direct the short study, which will host a major Community Forum on March 18, and take consensus on 7 key questions at the April Discussion Units. The League of Women Voters of the United States has sent the committee excellent background materials and pro and con arguments about the Compact, including a thorough inventory of the constitutional issues that are involved, which we will print in March.

On the facing page we are re-printing some of the background material we have received for this study, and we ask you to save this and later articles to bring to the March and April Discussion Units on NPV..

Connie Hannah, Co-chair, NPV Compact Study

ADOPT-A-POLL IN TRANSITION January 2009

For many years, Jan O'Dowd has ably managed the LWVSB Adopt-A-Poll program that provides staff for polling places on election days. Polling place support is crucial to our democratic process, ensuring that we have well-trained staff on election day to make the voting process a positive experience for all.

Adopt-A-Poll is also one of LWVSB's most reliable fund-raising efforts, because stipends allotted for the poll workers are paid directly to the League rather than to the individuals. In the November 2008 election, the two polling places that the League "adopted" generated about \$1,500; similar amounts came from the February and June voting. We thank Jan for her dedicated service in directing this program.

Jan has asked for some time now that other League members take over these duties, which are summarized below.

1. Serving as liaison with the Elections office (e.g., determining which polls LWVSB should "adopt")
2. Recruiting/screening volunteers (clerks, inspectors, etc.)
3. Arranging transportation for poll workers, if needed
4. Assembling teams for each polling place
5. Encouraging LWV members who work at the polls to donate their stipends to LWVSB
6. Monitoring and improving the program

LWVSB is forming a committee to manage the above activities. I am willing to help and am requesting that others volunteer to assist me.

**ADOPT-A-POLL IS IMPORTANT TO THE
LEAGUE AND TO THE COMMUNITY. PLEASE
CONTACT ME TO SAY YOU WILL HELP!**

Susan Shank, Voter Services Director

LWVSB EDUCATION FUND THANKS SUPPORTERS

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the LWVSB Education Fund, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Fund. Your donations underwrite the Voter Service and Citizen Education activities of the League. Note that *all donations are tax-deductible* since they are used only for non-advocacy activities of the League. Checks, made payable to the "LWVSB Education Fund," may be sent to the League office at any time. For further information please call. Thank you again for your support.

Irene Stone, LWVSB Ed Fund President

Background for the National Popular Vote Compact

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues, and recounts.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.*

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue?

To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at www.lwv.org) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.

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*Both houses in California have passed bills supporting NPV twice, but the Governor has vetoed it each time.

SINGING THE DELTA BLUES

The problems in California's Delta have been a long time concern of the League. Governor Schwarzenegger has appointed a blue ribbon task force to come up with a plan to address the issues. In October it released a *Delta Vision Strategic Plan*, which declared that there must be two co-equal goals:

1. Restore the Delta ecosystem;
2. Create a more reliable water supply for California.

The Delta is formed at the conflux of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and is the main relay for delivering water south of the Delta to farms and urban areas. It is a complicated system. Not often mentioned is that some of the levees are controlled by private interests, and some are governmental. There are state and federal projects. Many levees are very old and in need of repair. (Remember New Orleans?!)

The Santa Barbara League has received the summary of the recommendations to the governor contained in the *Delta Vision Committee Implementation Report*. The priorities that form the basis for a sustainable Delta include the following:

- A new system of dual water conveyance through the Delta*;
- An investment commitment (money) and strategy to restore and sustain a vibrant and diverse Delta ecosystem;
- Additional storage to allow greater operational flexi-

bility (dams and reservoirs);

- An investment plan to protect and enhance the Delta region;
- An emergency preparedness strategy;
- A plan to significantly improve and provide incentives for water conservation;
- Incentives for local and regional efforts to make better use of new sources of water, such as brackish water and desalination;
- An improved governance system.

The reports concluding paragraph starts with: "The Delta system is experiencing a steep decline . . ."

I have shortened the above goals, and the parentheses are my opinion. We will discuss this further at Water Committee, and we hope others will join us.

*The system called a dual water conveyance is similar to the peripheral canal. (Most politicians consider the peripheral canal and Prop. 13 as the third rail.) This new system would pump water from the north into a canal that bypasses the Delta and sends it south. When water is needed in the Delta for fish and to prevent seawater intrusion, etc. there would be gates that divert it from going south. Already there is talk that this will be held up in the courts for years, not forgetting the legislature and the ballot box.

Pat Shewczyk, Co-Chair, Water Committee

IT'S A NEW YEAR FOR THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

LWV has been busy already, sending letters to Congress and to the President's transition team, and on the state level, filing an amicus brief in a Prop. 8 challenge, weighing in on the budget crisis, and planning our next steps.

Input to the transition team:

Social policy: Our LWVUS president, Mary Wilson, serves on the executive committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), which submitted far-reaching suggestions on social programs, including civil rights and human rights, addressing poverty, health care, education, criminal justice, immigration reform, voting rights, equal opportunity, etc.

Open government, right-to-know: LWVUS was a participant in "MOVING TOWARD A 21ST CENTURY RIGHT-TO-KNOW AGENDA: Recommendations to President-elect Obama and Congress - By the Right to Know Community," a 100-page report that was also submitted.

Individual League members were urged to submit their own suggestions to the transition's health care reform team.

Input to Congress:

Climate change and greenhouse gases: LWV criticized a proposal by the US Climate Action Partnership, a coalition of industry and several environmental groups, as "too little, too late," and issued an ambitious challenge to Congress: "Based on the best available science, we urge you to support a cap on greenhouse gas emissions for the year 2020 that is at least 20 percent below 1990 levels, without loopholes that will undermine the cap. We also ask that you support a cap for the year 2050 that is 80-100 percent below 1990 emissions."

The League and other concerned organizations urged that any economic stimulus bill include green infrastructure and green jobs development that immediately puts people to work and reinvigorates the economy. An aid package for automakers should be tied to guaranteed improvement in greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy of manufacturer's fleets.

Health care: The League sent a letter to members of the House of Representatives urging them to support reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Rep. Lois Capps co-sponsored this bill, which quickly passed the House and, at this writing, is in the Senate.

Voting rights for the District of Columbia: The League is once again pushing for the DC Voting Rights Act, to give DC a voting member of Congress. The District's nonvoting delegate, Eleanor Holmes Norton, introduced the bill in the House, and LWV and other members of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights have urged that it be brought to the floor quickly. A slightly different version has been introduced in the Senate. Both bills would also give Utah another congress member (the Senate version states this more clearly) until the next census, because the last census under-counted the state's residents. LWV supports this compromise, which allows bipartisan support.

Ethics, lobbying, and campaign finance: Beginning two days after the election with a "Government Integrity Reform Agenda for the 111th Congress," LWV and our partners have urged Congress to set up (and then to improve) ethics rules for themselves, to enact lobbying disclosure laws, and to improve public campaign financing.

Letters to President Obama, and press releases:

In December, LWV asked then President-elect Obama to explore new ways to bring all Americans into policy-making efforts. In January, the League expressed optimism about President-elect Obama's stimulus plan – the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan – as well as about his transparency, health care reform, and renewable energy plans.

"On the eve of President-elect Obama's inaugural ceremony, the League is encouraged by the next President's promised approach to governing – one that is open, tolerant, transparent, inclusive and effective. We will work with the new Administration and Congress to make sure that the promise is fulfilled and the voices of American citizens are truly heard," Mary Wilson said.

See State Action on Page 7.


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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

I hope that you are now enjoying your new bright green Membership Directory 2008-2009. As usual there are new members to add and changes to make to our current member information each month. If you see a change that needs to be made in our new Directory, please call the office, 965-2422 or email lwvsb@verizon.net, or notify Joanie Jones.

Please welcome new members:

Mark E. Asman

Nancy Harter

Nancy Van Antwerp

Sandy & Robert Stites

Change of e-mail:

Barbara Edmison Members who have moved away: **Vashte Doublex**

STATE ACTION

Proposition 8 follow-up: On January 15, the League of Women Voters of California filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court, supporting the legal challenge against Proposition 8. The League's amicus brief argues that Proposition 8 is an invalid amendment to the California Constitution because it violates the overriding, fundamental constitutional principles of protection of equality and human dignity. The League also argues that Proposition 8 does not apply retroactively to invalidate same-sex marriages that took place before the measure took effect, because there is no clear indication of voter intent that it apply retroactively.

The budget crisis: LWVC has been closely following the state's budget crisis.

We believe California's budget should invest in services and infrastructure for the future. We oppose arbitrary across-the-board budget cuts and believe that all options, including revenue increases, must be on the table. The Governor and the Legislature have an obligation to protect California's people and our future.

The economic meltdown has revealed that California's finance system and budget process can't deal with a real crisis.

The League of Women Voters has long supported revenues that are sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services and that ensure fair sharing of the tax burden. A number of viable revenue sources are on the table, and it's imperative that the Legislature and the Governor adopt adequate funding for the services that Californians depend on.

You can follow all this action on League's websites: www.lwv.org for LWVUS, and www.lwvc.org for LWVC. Or sign up for the Grassroots Lobby Corps (LWVUS) or Action Alerts (LWVC), and be part of the action!

Linda Phillips, President, LWVSB



January Community Forum:

At the January Community Forum on Plan Santa Barbara, the League was honored to welcome our guest speakers: Bettie Weiss, City Planner; Barbara Shelton, Project Planner; and Harwood (Bendy) White, City Planning Commissioner.

CALENDAR – FEBRUARY 2009

Discussion Units: Voting Rights

- 3 Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush, 879-5537.
- 4 Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 10:00-11:30 a.m. Carpinteria Woman's Club, 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Contact: Barbara Godley.
- 4 Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Sheila Kamhi.
- 11 Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead.
- 13 Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 14 Saturday** **89th Birthday of the League of Women Voters.**
- 16 Monday** **Channel Voter deadline for March issue.**
- 18 Wednesday** **Community Forum:** "Social Policy in the Face of Economic Crisis." 12:15-2 p.m. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. **Speakers: Ann Dietrich**, Director of SB County's Alcohol, Drug & Mental Health Services; **Kathy Gallaher**, Director of SB County's Department of Social Services; **Roger Heroux**, Executive Director, Bringing Our Community Home; **Lynn Karlson**, Executive Director, Youth and Family Services Branch, The Channel Islands YMCA, and **Belen Seara**, Executive Director, PUEBLO. Brown bag lunch. Drinks and cookies provided.

LOOKING FORWARD TO MARCH 2009

Discussion Units: National Popular Vote Study

- 3 Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush.
- 4 Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 10:00-11:30 a.m. Carpinteria Woman's Club, 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. Contact: Barbara Godley.
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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. If you would like to join the local League, send in the form on pg. 7 or call the League office at 965-2422.

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