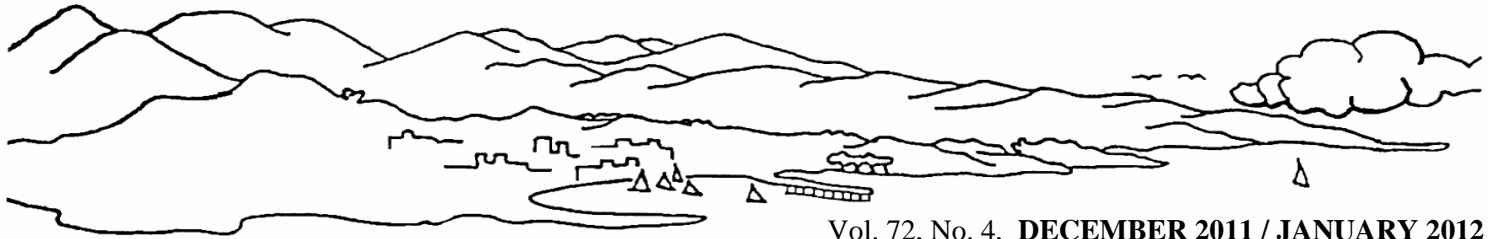




CHANNEL VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA

Serving South Santa Barbara County



Vol. 72, No. 4, **DECEMBER 2011 / JANUARY 2012**

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Holiday Party: Wear a Hat

Wednesday, December 14, 2011, 12 to 2 p.m.
Louise Lowry Davis Center, 1232 De La Vina St.

The party date is one week earlier than our usual community forum meeting.

A main course/dish will be provided along with beverages. Please bring a specialty dish of your own—either dessert or a side dish. Delight us with your holiday favorites; sign up with Pat Shewczyk.

There will be a program for the event, including a keynote speaker and poem. Invite your friends, family, and League coalition partners. Local dignitaries are also invited.

And to make it even more festive, wear a hat—any hat—a beautiful hat, funny hat, Santa Claus hat, Queen Elizabeth hat, or Uncle Sam hat, or *don't* wear a hat. It is just for the fun of it!

Jane Benefield, Director at Large/Observer Corps

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January Community Forum: Fracking - What You Wanted to Know

Wednesday, January, 18, 2012 - to 2 p.m.
Louise Lowry Davis Center, Free and open to the public.

At the League's annual meeting last June member Dorothy Campbell sounded an alarm about the fact that fracking -- a risky oil and gas production technique -- had already been practiced in this county and might continue. She urged LWVSB members to become informed and take appropriate action to protect our drinking water and other resources. We have been following through on her suggestion and at the January Community Forum will present an update of developments regarding the issue.

Fracking (the popular term for hydraulic fracturing) is a process in which large amounts of water are put down an oil or gas well at high pressure in order to break open cracks in hydrocarbon-rich shale so that the product can be released and flow up the well. The water typically is laced with chemicals, many of which are toxic. Some of the risk associated with fracking comes from the possibility of these chemicals contaminating the ground-

water. This could occur from spills above ground, leaks downhole or even migration back up through old wells in the same field. Another concern that is particularly relevant here in California is whether fracking can stimulate an earthquake.

So, what is being done about these possible dangers? On the local level the Board of Supervisors has approved the development of amendments to the county's permitting process for oil and gas operations to explicitly require environmental analysis and discretionary approval when fracking is planned. But on the state level the agency that oversees on-land oil and gas wells has no regulations pertaining to fracking and legislation that would require disclosure is stalled in committee. On the federal level there are studies underway and again there is legislation

Continued on page 3

Healing the Heart of Democracy

With the growing “Occupy Wall Street” movement, and a new effort to “Heal the Heart of Democracy” discussed below, it is exciting to see the tremendous upsurge of civic engagement, including a broader discussion of public policies that either support or impede our democracy. As always in League, there are many opportunities for engagement on public policy issues that impact individuals and communities every day.

For example, if you are concerned about the potential (and existing) transfer of federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the LWVUS Privatization Study is for you. Join LWVSB Privatization Study Co-Chairs Pat Shewczyk (964-7506) and Sheila Kamhi (682-0757) in this action-packed but short-lived study. As a committee member, you will review background material provided by LWVUS (seven papers). See www.lwv.org for more information (on the blue menu bar, click on “For Members,” and under that, on “Projects and Programs, then “Privatization Study). You will also have the opportunity to help present study information at the March Community Forum, facilitate consensus meetings at our April Units, and report to LWVUS by May 1. The goal is to reach nationwide consensus on Privatization in order to form a League Position on which to base our Advocacy.

On October 11, I attended a gathering to view a webcast by the educator and founder of the Center for Courage and Renewal, Parker Palmer. The discussion revolved around ideas presented in Palmer’s new book, “Healing the Heart of Democracy,” that I think resonate with the League’s values. They include “Five Habits of the Heart that Help Make Democracy Possible [abbreviated]:

1. An understanding that we are all in this together – we are interdependent and accountable to one another
2. An appreciation of the value of “otherness” – “us and them” doesn’t have to mean us vs. them,” and rediscovering the ancient tradition of hospitality to the stranger
3. An ability to hold tension in life-giving ways – recognizing the gap between our aspirations and our behavior and that the tension it engenders can open us to a new understanding of ourselves and the world (i.e. we are all imperfect and we are living in an imperfect world)
4. A sense of personal voice and agency – while we may lack confidence in our own voice and our ability to make a difference, it is possible for us to find our

voices, learn to use them, and contribute to creating positive change (this habit is a League specialty!)

5. A capacity to create community – community can be created in a variety of settings and the steady companionship of even two or three kindred spirits can kindle the courage we need to speak and act as citizens (indeed, the camaraderie of the LWV makes that happen every day)

Our little group in Santa Barbara was one of more than 1,000 that convened around the country with the goal of initiating “Healing Democracy Action Circles” that will meet monthly from January through June 2012. As a League member, I found the discussion exciting and full of potential. These “Healing Circles” may help channel the angst and anger felt across the country and across the political spectrum. Consider the Tea Party and the “Occupy Wall Street” protests that have multiplied throughout the U.S., including Santa Barbara. Can there be dialogue between the two groups and can common ground be found? With the League’s non-partisan stand and reasoned approach to issues, LWV members have much to contribute to the conversations and transformations under way.

And finally, if you are interested in improving your Action and Advocacy skills and helping the LWVSB expand Action and Advocacy on issues on which the League has a position, make note that we are planning a Regional Action Training early in the New Year ~ more details to come. Thank you for all you have done to keep League vital in 2011. Here’s to our work together in League in 2012.

Beth Pitton-August, Co-President Program & Action



Stacy and Beth

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

Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org • Web: <http://lwvsantabarbara.org>

Busy Election Season Ahead

As the Holidays approach and the seasons change, there are two particular topics on my mind. They are elections and SmartVoter! 2012 will bring with it a busy election season, and we're already gearing up.

SmartVoter will be especially busy this year. If you have time in your schedule – even a couple of hours to spare – please give me a call about helping out. We have letters to send to candidates and web pages to approve, for starters. SmartVoter will be particularly important given the fact that the 24th district has been redrawn and the race looks to be competitive!

Also, please remember to get your dues into the office if you haven't already done so. We have made great efforts to keep League membership affordable. However, we realize things happen, especially in a down economy. If you need help paying your dues and you wish to stay active, please contact Beth or me and we will make alternative arrangements with you.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Holiday Party! Have a safe holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Stacy Shepherd
Co-President Membership/Community Education

January Units: National Program Planning and Priorities

Every two years local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process - *this is how we remain a grassroots organization.*

In our January units, we'll consider what recommendations we should make to our national League Board about program issues. Have you seen issues that we can't act on because we've never studied them? Do some of our positions need to be reviewed and updated? Is there a state or local position that we think LWVUS should adopt? Or should we concentrate on advocacy and education using our current national positions?

During the spring, we continue the process by discussing these ideas with Leaguers around the country, usually on an email discussion group. The best and most widely supported proposals may be taken to national convention. There, delegates may vote to conduct a study leading to a new or updated position, or adopt a state position nationally ("concurrence"); or they may decide that the current positions meet our needs. I hope some of you who went to last May's state convention in Ventura participated in some of the caucuses and floor debates on LWVUS program - always both exciting and edifying!

At the January units, we'll also talk about what LWVUS positions we've used to act on both local issues, and in community education.

And we've been asked for our input on national legislative priorities for 2012. These are the urgent issues that we expect League will need to watch most closely and act upon in Congress and elsewhere. Our broad positions enable us to advocate on narrower issues, and specific bills, regulations, and court cases. So these priorities guide next year's practical applications of the positions we've established over the years.

2011 advocacy priorities are Health Care defense, Clean Air defense, Money in Elections, and Election Administration. In addition, "if an opportunity arises and does not interfere with action on an advocacy priority, the LWVUS may take action on the following issues: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Climate Change; Ethics; Immigration; and Safe Drilling and Mining ('Fracking')."

Please join us in our January discussion units (see the Calendar for dates and locations).

Linda Phillips, Director, State & Local Action

To get ready for the January units, contact Sheila Kamhi for a printed copy of the most updated LWVUS Impact on Issues or go to www.lwv.org and click on "For Members" on the upper blue bar. Then click "Essential League Resources" and find "Impact on Issues" under "Basics."

January Community Forum *(Continued from page 1)*

that is not moving.

To learn more about this topic come to our Community Forum on Jan. 18. Speakers are not all firmed up yet, but will include a representative of the Environmental Defense Center; also Bob Field, president of a Santa Ynez Valley water company and Chris Wrather, chairman of the Los Alamos Planning Advisory Committee.

There will be time for questions and discussion. Bring your brown bag lunch; cookies and beverages will be provided. Parking is free at the center, which is located at 1232 de la Vina Street.

LIVELY NOVEMBER COMMUNITY FORUM ON
"WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF TAJIGUAS LANDFILL? NEW OPTIONS FOR OUR WASTE."



Everett King,
Environmental
Services Coordinator
for the City of Goleta



Leslie Wells, County
Manager for Resource
Recovery and Waste
Management



Connie Hannah, League
Sustainable Communities
Committee Co-Chair



Mike Lunsford, President
of the Gaviota Coast
Conservancy Committee
Co-Chair



Mark Schleich, County
Resource Recovery and
Waste Management
Deputy Director

State Action

Initiatives being circulated - Be careful what you sign!

It's that time of year again - initiative petitions seem to be everywhere. Some of the initiatives and referenda being circulated, as in the past, are very deceptive. Be sure to read and understand them before you sign any! A good place to get information on the various petitions is www.ballotpedia.org.

Redistricting of California Still Controversial

Good News: In late October the California Supreme Court unanimously denied two pending petitions for writs of mandate that challenged the validity of the State Senate and Congressional redistricting maps that have been certified by the Citizens Redistricting Commission.

Bad News: Efforts are underway to undo the new maps.

As you know, LWVC urged everyone to "Decline to Sign" two referendum petitions to overturn the Congressional and State Senate district maps set by the new California Citizens Redistricting Commission. The deadline for both of these was Nov. 13. The California Secretary of State's office is now counting signatures on the Senate redistricting referendum petitions; if it qualifies, it will be on the November 2012 ballot, and League will surely oppose it. The Congressional redistricting petition signatures weren't turned in, so that effort is dead.

Support the SAFE California Act Signature Gathering Campaign

Join LWV in supporting the SAFE California Act to repeal the death penalty. Petitions are now being circulated to collect the necessary signatures to qualify this initiative for the November 2012 ballot. More information will be coming soon on how to get involved.

The initiative would stop executions and replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment (life without the possibility of parole), including the conversion of existing death sentences to that alternative. Inmates would be required to work and pay restitution to the victims' compensation fund. And some of the savings created by no longer seeking and imposing death sentences would be used to bolster the capacity of law enforcement to solve the serious crimes of rape and homicide.

LWV Position on the Death Penalty

At Convention 2006, delegates voted to adopt the following League position: The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the abolition of the death penalty. This decision was made in concurrence with a position adopted by the LWV of Illinois. The position has mainly been used by state Leagues to support initiatives to abolish the death penalty in their states - as the California League is now doing.

For more information or to volunteer, call the office at 965-2422 or email action@lwvsantabarbara.org.

*Linda Phillips, State and National Action
Jane Benefield, Director-at-Large/Observer Corps*

Restorative Justice Not Jail for the Homeless LWVSB's October Forum

Our October Forum took place, as usual, at the Louise Lowry Davis Center. It was very well attended and there was a great discussion. Each member of the panel spoke to their particular area of expertise and the issue was very well represented.

Our starting off point was the recent Grand Jury Report, "HOMELESS, MENTALLY-ILL, INDIGENT RECIDIVISM." On Sept. 13th of this year, the Santa Barbara City Council unanimously endorsed the consolidation of three of the primary agencies addressing homelessness issues in the County. It has been proposed that Bringing Our Community Home (BOCH), Common Ground Santa Barbara and the three regional Homeless Advisory Committees would be organized under a Leadership Council of elected officials, the composition of which will be determined.

The purpose of this regionwide consolidation is to allow a more coordinated effort in addressing the complex spectrum of homelessness issues, providing a more comprehensive continuum of care, and to help save money while improving the status of homeless individuals and families, especially the chronically homeless.

Sheriff Bill Brown told us about the efforts his organization makes to try to identify the mentally-ill and indigents when they are arrested so that they can attempt to get people the help they need. This is increasingly more important, given the responsibility for housing inmates is being shifted, due to the California State realignment of inmates to County facilities.

Dr. Ann Detrick spoke as the Director of the Santa Barbara County Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS). The ADMHS has an ongoing interest in getting those with mental illness in our community the help they need whether they are housed or without housing. As always, funding is always a concern for all the organizations which serve the mentally-ill in Santa Barbara County. It is a constant challenge to keep this vulnerable community served and served well.

Jeff Shaffer of Common Ground Santa Barbara provided a point of view based on an extensive, "in the community" survey of what he called "our friends without homes". Using the "Vulnerability Index", detailed information was painstakingly gathered about

who is the most vulnerable among the homeless, and how best to treat and house them, addressing the most needy first. Shaffer suggested that giving money to the homeless isn't always the best option, and that handing out nutrition bars and clean new socks could alleviate suffering and hunger, and would do no harm for those who suffer from addiction.

Supervisor Doreen Farr was unable to attend, and Emily Allen graciously filled in for her, explaining the situation for the chronically and mentally-ill homeless, as their experience takes place in the courts. She provided information about the new Restorative Court, a voluntary program that assists people with minor tickets related to homelessness to obtain stable housing.

As a significant majority of state Leagues have positions on incarceration and recidivism, and the California League is one of the few that has not yet adopted a position as such, a number of local Leagues in California have adopted consensus positions so they can participate in policy making on this significant social issue. It is toward this end that we offered this informational panel, in the hope that our local League will soon have a position and a plan.

Our forum was recorded and will appear on Community TV Channel 17 or 21 at a later date if you would like to see it in its entirety.

League members may also be interested in participating more in helping the homeless community.

It was announced that Common Ground Santa Barbara is hosting a training for volunteers who want to work with friends being housed, living in vehicles, or living on our streets. The training will take place from 9am to 3pm on Jan. 21 at Grace Lutheran Church, 3869 State Street, Santa Barbara. This training will introduce you to the story of homelessness in our county, the different ways you can be involved, and the basic needs of our friends on the streets. After the training you will have an understanding and a direction of how you can be involved in the future. If you want to make a difference in creating a holistically healthy community, you can sign up for the training at: <http://www.commongroundsb.org/empowerment-training.html>

Toni Schultheis, Director, Social Policy

The League on Fracking

This is the LWVUS RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SAFE DRILLING AND MINING FOR ENERGY RESOURCES

"Be it therefore resolved that we, representatives at the 2010 National Convention of the League of Women Voters, call upon the Board to use the resources of the League to support and lobby for significant strengthening of appropriate regulation, oversight, inspection, and penalties associated with the development of fossil fuel resources. This strengthening should include elimination from national and state legislation of the exemptions for drilling and mining, as well as additional legislation requiring the federal and state agencies to regulate drilling and mining in a manner consistent with the preservation of a healthy environment."

The reasons given for this resolution included the following (paraphrased from the "whereases"):

For many years, LWVUS has had strong positions on natural resources and environmental protection. The overarching position on Natural Resources is: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health."

(If you want to know more about the League's detailed positions, see the publication *Impact on Issues*, mentioned in the article on our January discussion units - and then come to the units to discuss them!)

Current practices of and disposal of waste from drilling and mining for energy resources (oil, gas, and coal) have caused serious and permanent damage to the environment and public health. New drilling and mining technologies are being developed and used, which have

the potential to cause additional damage to the environment and public health, as has already been experienced in a number of states.

Legislation and regulations regarding the protection of water, air and other environmental resources do not now adequately cover these problems, and most have explicit exemptions for various forms of drilling and mining. The orientation, mission and policies of the EPA and other federal regulatory agencies vary with the presidential administration in power, so that legislation is needed to ensure continuity across administrations. Also, enforcement of existing legislation and regulations has been severely inadequate, and current pressure for energy independence is encouraging the hasty development of energy resources, necessitating early action for strong protective legislation.

Gaps in federal legislation and oversight have left much of the responsibility to the individual states, with the consequence that each state must develop its own studies and regulations while possibly also causing pollution to the water and air of neighboring states.

Information on several forms of drilling and mining plus relevant legislation can be found at the EarthJustice website. Some of the information can be found from the home page, and one can search the site for other topics. The website is www.earthjustice.org. Also see the report on fracking in the September *Channel VOTER* (p. 6), which includes information about a petition that EarthJustice sent to EPA on behalf of LWV and other groups.

The Pennsylvania LWV study of Fracking, including an economic and environmental analysis, can be found by following the link for the Marcellus Shale at <http://palwv.org>.

Linda Phillips, State and National Action



Are You on Facebook?

Of course you can use it to keep up with friends, kids and grandkids. But Facebook can also help you find out what's happening with the League. And you can do you part to help the League grow.

Go to www.facebook.com (sign up if you haven't) and check out "League of Women Voters," which is the US League, LWVofCA to find out the latest state news, and LWVSB for what's happening with our local League.

Then be sure to share the League posts with all your friends.

Vicki Allen, CV Editor



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Membership News

The Holidays are here and the new year is upon us. 2012 will prove to be a very interesting year. I hope that each of you will think of someone you might like to offer the gift of membership. This does not mean you will pay their dues, but invite them to come to our Holiday Meeting or the January Forum. Both will be fun, informational and exciting.

There are still a few individuals who have not renewed their membership. We hope you will as we do not want to lose anyone. With the continuing economic difficulties, if you need some assistance, LWVSB does have a scholarship program. Please let me know.

A new member orientation is being planned for February 2012. Stay tuned for the date. I know this is late for many new members; you are already active! We will discuss LWV local, state and national levels. A mentor will be assigned to anyone who wants one.

Amanda Pelch, Director, Membership Development

MEMBERSHIP FORM to join LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA

<input type="checkbox"/> Here's my annual membership dues of \$60*	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Second member in same household \$30	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$30	_____ Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Please send me more information about League	Phone _____ Fax _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I can't join right now; here is my contribution of \$_____ to support the League.	E-mail _____

Make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Discounted dues are available for special circumstances. Amanda Pelch, 452-5804.*

Calendar

DECEMBER 2011 - NO UNIT MEETINGS

14 Wednesday: Community Forum/Annual Holiday Party, 12-2 p.m., Louise Lowry Davis Center, 1232 De La Vina St. Local dignitaries invited. Free and open to the public.

LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY, 2012

January Discussion Units:

National Program Planning and Priorities

- 3 Tuesday: Supper Unit - 5:30 p.m., Madame Lu's Restaurant, 3524 State St., Lolly Quackenbush.**
- 4 Wednesday: Evening Unit - 7:30 p.m., Sheila Kamhi house, 1040 Portesuello Ave.** Co-chairs: Pat Shewczyk and Sheila Kamhi.
- 11 Wednesday: Carpinteria Unit - 10 a.m., Carpinteria Women's Club, 1059 Vallecito Rd.** Chair: Barbara Godley.
- 11 Wednesday: Valle Verde Unit - 2 p.m., North Gazebo, 900 Calle de los Amigos, Contact Joan Kerns.**

- 14 Saturday: LWVSB Board meeting, 10 a.m., League Office at 328 A East Carrillo.**
- 16 Monday: Martin Luther King Observance, 9 a.m.,** pre-march program and rally at De La Guerra Plaza, 10 a.m. march begins at De La Guerra St. and proceeds up State St. to Arlington Theater, 11 a.m. program at Arlington Theater, and 1 p.m. community lunch at First Methodist Church.
- 18 Wednesday: Community Forum: Fracking - What You Wanted to Know.** Various aspects of this issue will be discussed by local experts. **12-2 p.m., Louise Lowry Davis Center.** Free and open to the public.

Remember to check the LWVSB web site (<http://lwvsantabarbara.org>) for the latest event information.



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