



VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

February 2007

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MEMBER MEETING POSITIONS UPDATE

Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2007
Time: 7:30 - 9 p.m.

or

Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2007
Time: 10 a.m. – 12 noon
Place: Hollimon's
 11155 La Paloma Drive, Cupertino
Who: Members and guests

LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

Co-president	Susan Hough
Co-president	Elaine Manley
Secretary	Louise Levy
Treasurer	Roberta Hollimon

Directors	Fran Grabau
	Alexander Howard
	Marilyn Howard
	LaVerne Prentice
	Jason Spiller

Members have expressed an interest in learning more about the positions that we have adopted at the local level which are the basis for our action and advocacy. A position is the stand of the League on a specific, often narrowly defined, public issue.

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale League plans to take an in-depth look at some of our local positions. Why did we study these issues? What are our beliefs? How have we applied the position? Are there actions we should be taking now?

Join us for a lively discussion and help formulate the program of the local League.

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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SAVE THE DATES

Juvenile Justice Forum

Saturday, March 17
 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Mountain View City Council Chambers

Sponsor: Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County

Kickoff Rally

to recruit volunteers for Cool Cities teams
 which will promote concern about Global Warming.

Sunday, March 18
 2:00 – 4 p.m.

Sponsor: Sierra Club

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGES

Our League is becoming more active and we'd like you to join us in the fun. Do you have an opinion about things? I bet you do. We have local issues that were developed many years ago. We are getting together on Feb 13th (7:30 p.m.) and Feb 14th (10 a.m.) to go over some of those positions and we'd like your input. Please join us and tell us how you feel about these subjects.

We also have Health Care as a major issue in California. I am looking for a few people that would like to focus on that issue. If you or someone you know would like to participate in the action, please call me at 246-5022 or email at elaine.manley@comcast.net. I look forward to talking with you. :-)

Elaine Manley

I'm going to second Elaine's suggestion that you bring your thoughts and opinions to our February member meetings, where we'll explore positions that our local League has established over the years and make changes where needed. Don't you ever find yourself wondering how it is that I can write to the local paper and say, "The League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale thinks..." What does a president use to justify her claim to speak for you? And, if you don't like what I've said with your voice recently, how can you change it? If you do like what's been said with our collective voice but wish we spoke up louder and fiercer, how can you strengthen it? When the president speaks from the positions we've arrived at together, it's your voice -- learn to make sure it really speaks for you.

Susan Hough

ELECTION WRAP-UP

Local Leagues in California were very busy providing nonpartisan election material to voters across the state. In addition to literally hundreds of candidate forums and speaking engagements, local Leagues distributed thousands of *Pros and Cons* this past election season. They also contributed significantly to the *Easy Voter Guide*, with 1.4 million booklets distributed in five languages and 100,000 visitors to the Web site as well as 1.7 million newspaper reprints, proving that the guide has grown over the past few years to become an election staple for California voters.

Smart Voter continues to increase the number of voters, particularly young voters, it reaches. For the November election it received 7,000,000 page views. More than 5,000 candidates posted their information on the website and there was information on 364 ballot issues. Another measure of success is the number of websites that link to Smart Voter. There were 6,000 links from television, radio and newspaper sites; College Student Association sites, election officials' sites; other government sites; and bloggers. There was even a YouTube posting.

Board Briefs

At its January meeting your board:

- Discussed supporting the Health Care bill – "OneCareNow."
- Agreed to send a Community Appeal letter in March.
- Heard that a coalition of organizations and governments along El Camino Real is working to create a "Grand Boulevard."
- Decided to investigate cost savings of sending the VOTER by email rather than USPS bulk mail.

Looking Back

15 years ago a League member moderated a meeting between Kaiser Cement and the community. As reported in the VOTER, "The League's even-handed approach to discussing even somewhat controversial issues works well in a variety of community environments and need not be confined to election issues."

Membership News

Thank you for renewing your membership: Terry Grant, Susan Hough, Bruce Kendall, Jason Spiller, and Pete Warburton.

Welcome new member Mary Boyle.

Thank you for including a contribution with your renewal: Andrea Harris and Leanne and Chuck Untilis.

FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE With a Running Start...

Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2007
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Place: Los Altos Youth Center – Civic Center Plaza
1 North San Antonio Road, Los Altos

Speakers

Michael Kirst

Stanford Education Professor, author and national education expert

Martha Kanter

Chancellor of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District

Barry Groves

Superintendent, Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District

Join a stimulating panel discussion addressing relevant educational issues:

- We think about a unified K-12 (kindergarten through twelfth grade), but what about K-16?
- Are our children inadequately or over-prepared for college?
- If the majority want a four-year college education, why do so many leave before a degree?
- What about career opportunities, where do our children gain employable skills?
- What are we doing in the highly competitive, global, twenty-first century to ensure opportunities and success for each and every high school graduate?

A Community Dialogues forum co-sponsored by: Los Altos-Mountain View League of Women Voters, MVLA Community Scholars, Partners for New Generations, and Mesa de la Comunidad

KICKING THE OIL HABIT: What offers real hope? What's just hype?

Date: Saturday, February 10, 2007
Time: 9:30 a.m.– 12 noon.
Place: Mountain View High School Theater
3535 Truman, Mountain View
Corner of Bryant (off Grant Road) and Truman

Presenters:

Jeff Byron

Commissioner, California Energy Commission (CEV) and chair of its Transportation Committee

Dan Sperling

Director, Institute of Transportation Studies, UC Davis; co-editor "The Hydrogen Energy Transition"

Stefan Unnasch

Senior Manager at Tiax, contractor to the CEC for life-cycle analyses of alternatives to petroleum

Margaret Bruce

Director of Environmental Programs, Silicon Valley Leadership Group

California is actively looking for ways to reduce our petroleum dependency. Ways exist but developing them presents challenges, challenges which may in fact limit the realistic potential of commercial development. This forum will explore the real possibilities and offer some ideas about the timetables for transition.

HOW TO DO THE LWVUS IMMIGRATION STUDY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The following is the first in a series of articles on the Immigration Study adopted by delegates at the National League convention in June 2006. Future issues of the VOTER will include articles and other background material on Immigration. If you are interested in joining the local Immigration Study Committee, contact Elaine Manley at 246-5022 or elaine.manley@comcast.net

BACKGROUND – HOW DID WE GET TO A STUDY?

Studies are part of League program, and, in League parlance, League program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy, as well as the procedure for adopting these positions (see *Impact on Issues* for a complete list of these positions). Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to the League publication, *In League*, “Program is the League’s reason for being.”

Program is three tiered and includes (1) selection of an issue, (2) study of that issue and consensus, and (3) use of the resulting position to affect public policy. This discussion of how to do a study is limited to the first two steps, and is also focused on a national study. But it is important to know that studies are initiated at all three levels of the League – national, state, and local - depending on the topic, as well as the level at which the resulting position is appropriate and can be most effective. For example, local Leagues study those issues that will result in positions they can use to affect public policy at the local governmental level, and state Leagues address issues that will result in efforts to influence state legislative action. During studies initiated at the local and state levels, responsibility for writing the scope, providing background information, and creating consensus questions shifts to the local and state Leagues. *But at all levels, the purpose of the study is to educate members so that they can be informed participants in consensus and provide necessary data for formulating the ultimate position.* The process is always a grassroots process, regardless of which level of League initiates the study.

FIRST STEP – SELECTION OF AN ISSUE (PROGRAM PLANNING)

League program begins with the grassroots process, Program Planning. Every two years, local Leagues participate in LWVUS Program Planning and identify issues of interest for study at the national level - issues on which the LWVUS has no position, and, consequently, is unable to take action to affect public policy in that area. The League cannot take action without a position.

SECOND STEP - STUDY OF THE ISSUE AND CONSENSUS

The Role of the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee –

Initially, the role of the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee is to define the scope of the study, to educate Leagues and League members about the study process, to provide background information on the issue, to suggest resources, and to publicize the study to Leagues and the public. Later in the study, the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee will write consensus questions for local Leagues and use their responses to create an immigration position statement. The LWVUS Board approves the scope, consensus questions, and position.

The Role of the Local League Study Committees –

The local League Immigration Study Committee will divide up the workload—interviewing, reading, researching, and writing—in order to more effectively cover and share information with each other, their League and their communities. The local League Immigration Study Committee is responsible for:

- providing, publicizing and distributing materials and utilizing opportunities for League members and their communities to educate themselves about a variety of aspects and perspectives of the issue, including the impact of immigration on their communities. Some topics will be of more interest than others and will provide a natural focus, but in all cases Leagues should at least help provide an overview of the issue.
- establishing and adhering to the study timeline
- serving as resource persons

Role of Members –

Last, but certainly not least, League members, have a tremendous responsibility to take advantage of every opportunity offered—attend meetings, read publications, and follow the issue in newspapers and news magazines, for instance—to educate themselves during a League study. Ultimately, League members must come to some sort of broad agreement on the values they hold related to immigration. *The League calls this consensus.* From this consensus will come a position that the League will use for years to come to affect national policy. Helping to form program in this manner may be League members’ most important role.

Immigration 101: The Basics

The following resource list contains introductory and overview information on US immigration.

Books and Reports

William Dudley, Ed. Illegal Immigration. Opposing Viewpoints Series. Greenhaven Press. 2002
Includes expert opinions in a pro/con format. Available new and used from amazon.com

Oscar Handlin. The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People. Little, Brown and Co. 1973 University of Pennsylvania Press. 2002.
As the title indicates, this book is about the history of immigration in this country. Both printings are available new and used from amazon.com.

Immigration and America's Future: A New Chapter. Report of the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future. Spencer Abraham and Lee H. Hamilton, Co-Chairs. Migration Policy Institute. 2006
Just released on September 20, 2006, this publication may be ordered on the Migration Policy Institute at www.migrationpolicy.org for \$14.95. Includes policy recommendations. Because of its timeliness and its conciseness (93 pages of text), this may be the one book on immigration issues that you want

Tamar Jacoby, Ed. Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What it Means to be American. NY: Free Press. 2004
This is a compilation of writings from various authors, expressing a variety of opinions about immigration. Available new and used from amazon.com

Ann Chih Lin. Immigration CQs Vital Issues Series. CQ Press. 2002.
Even handed analysis of immigration, covering all sides of issue. Available new and used from amazon.com

Ruben Martinez. Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail. (Henry Holt and Co.).
First person, anecdotal account of a migrant family. New and used, paperback and hard copy available at amazon.com

Aristide Zolberg. A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy: the Fashioning of America. (Russell Sage Foundation. 2006)
Covers the history of US immigration policy from the Declaration of Independence to date.

Articles

The State of American Public Opinion on Immigration in Spring 2006: A Review of Major Surveys. Pew Hispanic Center Factsheet. www.pewhispanic.org

Websites

Migration Policy Institute's Migration Information Source www.migrationpolicy.org provides a gateway to solid demographic information in the US and a link to state-specific information

Pew Hispanic Center www.pewhispanic.org (see articles)

United States Citizenship and Immigration Service www.uscis.gov website includes not only the nuts and bolts of the various processes of the service, but also immigration statistics.

New American Opportunity Campaign (NAOC) www.cirnow.org. Pro-immigrant organization working for comprehensive immigration law reform. "Immigration Basics" includes helpful information.

National Immigration Forum www.immigrationforum.org website includes information about current events – reports, legislative action, news releases, etc.

National Immigration Law Center www.nilc.org website includes mostly current event coverage.

LAO RAISES WARNING FLAGS ABOUT THE BUDGET

As the new legislative session gets under way, the Governor's vision continues to be that of California moving forward to a bright future with no new taxes. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) fiscal outlook for next year, however, takes a more sober view marked with a number of warning flags.

The LAO says that while this year's budget is expected to end with a reserve of about \$3.1 billion, projected expenditures will exceed revenues by about \$5 billion in each of the next two budget years. The reserve could help to balance next year's (2007-2008) budget, leaving a \$2.4 billion deficit to be dealt with, but this does not solve the ongoing structural deficit.

These obligations, added to the debt incurred with the passage of new infrastructure bonds approved by the voters in November, would push the debt service ratio, which is the percentage of the General Fund (GF) needed to repay debts, up sharply over the next few years to a peak of 8.1 percent in 2009-2010 before dropping back to a more normal 6 percent. The Governor and Legislature can stretch out the repayment of the deficit bonds, and may be likely to do so, given the consequences to a number of program areas

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The LAO does include a transfer of funds to the Budget Stabilization Account required under Proposition

58, half of which is supposed to go to accelerated repayment of the deficit financing bonds. These repayments, as well as borrowing from other special funds, local governments and schools, represent the major share of the deficit and average about \$3 billion a year for the next few years.

In the last couple of years the reserve was generated by a healthy economy that produced higher than expected revenues. The Governor and Legislature used that windfall to increase spending in many program areas. Now the question is whether they can maintain that spending and deal with the ongoing deficit if, as the LAO expects, the economy is more "subdued" in 2007. The LAO's estimates do not include the Governor's "compact" with higher education, which promised increased future funding.

The LAO notes several areas of increased costs that will squeeze the budget. One is the rising cost of pension and health benefits for retired state employees. These are now paid out of the annual GF. The administration has proposed to fund part of this liability through a pension obligation bond, but has so far been stymied by adverse court rulings. In the meantime, the LAO says the unfunded future liability is approaching \$100 billion.

Schools, on the other hand, will benefit substantially from the operation of Proposition 98 on the overall general fund and increases in the local property tax contribution. The LAO estimates K-14 funding will be 4.3 percent higher than this year.

The LAO says that in a good economy the state should be generating surpluses rather than deficits, and that a continuing failure to "address the long-term fiscal imbalance would leave the state in a precarious position."

LWVC Update, December 2006

LEAGUE NEWS

National - The League and coalition partners sent a number of letters to senators urging them to take action on adopting comprehensive ethics changes and mirror the actions taken by the House earlier in January. League President Mary Wilson spoke out against the blockage of the ethics package by 46 senators.

State – LWVC President, Jackie Jacobberger, spoke at the Governor’s press conference when he announced his support for redistricting reform.

County – The County League made plans for a countywide meeting on Juvenile Justice.

DC VOTING RIGHTS EDUCATION PROJECT

The LWV of Southwest Santa Clara Valley held an incredibly successful DC Voting Rights event in Saratoga. Their “DC Democracy Project” was a family program featuring children’s stories and hands-on activities. The project is designed to educate children ages 5-12 and their families about our country’s principles of democracy and show them how to use their tools of democracy by working to fix a real problem within the United States. The problem is the lack of equal voting rights and self-government for 600,000 Americans living in Washington, DC.

Activities for children include:

- Exploring stories of people like Martin Luther King, women suffragists, and Gandhi who used nonviolence to bring about sweeping change.
- Visiting a US Congressman’s office to understand the value of representation.
- Holding a Kids’ Democracy Day festival featuring several hands-on activities to learn about voting machines, petitions, voter registration, media, local government, etc.
- Formation of a team to design a bi-coastal culminating event with kids in Washington, DC to celebrate what they’ve learned and to teach even more people about DC’s plight.

Through this program children learn ways to make a difference in their community, civic education comes alive for them through hands-on activities, and more people learn about DC citizens’ lack of equal voting rights and self-government

For more information and times and locations of future activities, contact:

Marico Sayoc, 408-356-2858, maricosayoc@yahoo.com
Jane Varner Malhotra, 408-973-9030, jane@youngsuffragists.org

LEAGUE WEBSITES

National www.lwv.org
State www.ca.lwv.org
Bay Area www.lwvba-ca.org
County www.scc.ca.lwvnet.org
Local www.cs.ca.lwvnet.org

Help Make Government Work Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

____ \$50 Individual member

Name: _____

____ \$75 Two members in a household

Address: _____

____ Contribution \$ _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Checks made out to LWVCS are not tax deductible.