



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

VOTER

March 2011

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Be an informed voter

MARCH - APRIL CALENDAR LWVSLO

March 1 Tuesday	BOARD MEETING- Rabobank, Broad Street Branch, SLO Public Meeting Room	5:30 – 7:00 PM
April 2 Saturday	TEA WITH TRUDY “Good Times- Then and Now” Full Tea Menu - \$10 donation Arlene Powers, 2148 Inyo, Los Osos	1:30 – 3:30 PM
April 5 Tuesday	BOARD MEETING Rabobank, Broad Street Branch, SLO Public Meeting Room	5:30 – 7:00 PM
April 30 Saturday Botanical Gardens	“THE GATHERING OF THE GREEN” A conversation with Hunter Francis, Cal Poly	

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Message from the President



Emily Penfield

Happy Spring!

The greening of the hills and the lengthening of our mostly sunny central coast days reminds us that Spring is just around the corner. This means more time for activities! Our League calendar is full of interesting and entertaining events right up to the annual meeting in May.

For those of you who were unable to attend the February 17 Education Panel at the Ludwick Center in San Luis Obispo, you now may view it on television throughout March. Refer to the schedule in this issue of the VOTER. We also have copies of the discussion on DVD's, which will be used as an excellent introduction to our national study on the role of the federal government in education.

We have had to change the date of our membership tea from March 26 to April 2. Your invitation will be arriving shortly. Our theme for the tea is "Then and Now," and will feature our county wide Centennial Celebration of California Women getting the right to vote (then) and "Grow the Future", the upcoming League of Women Voters of California Convention in Ventura May 13 – 15 (now). Trudy Jarrett and Arlene Powers will be on hand to give you all the details on both events. We promise you an exciting time and great refreshments, including

scones and clotted cream. Come and bring a friend!

Later in the month for our Gathering of the Green celebration April 30, Cindy Marie Absey has arranged for us to spend an afternoon at the San Luis Obispo Botanic Gardens with special guest, Professor Hunter Davis of Cal Poly, followed by continuous docent-led tours of the Garden. Light refreshments will be served. This should provide a pleasant occasion for all the family.

Do consider going to convention in May, even if it is just for one day. Room rates at the Crowne Plaza are quite reasonable and the hotel is easily reached from both HWY 101 and the train station, which has connections from San Luis Obispo. This is the first time it has been out of the population "hubs" of Northern and Southern California, and not likely to be back for some time.

Finally, if you happen to be in Paso Robles later this month, stop by the Carnegie building in the park to see a special exhibit by the League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County featuring past and present happenings.

As Always,

Emily

emilypenfield@yahoo.com

League Education Panel Discussion Running on Channel 19

You can find the replay of our very successful League Education Panel Discussion on COE-TV Charter Cable Channel 19 on:

Mon. and Wed. 2-28, 3-2, 3-7, 3-9, at 6 pm
Fri. and Sat. at 8 am and 8 pm and Sun. at 8 am



LWVSLO Education Forum Begins National Study

The wind and rain February 17, could not dampen the spirited audience at the League's Education Forum highlighting the changing Federal role in local education. While the cameras rolled on a video to be shown later on cable TV, Emily Penfield, president, welcomed Dr. Julian Crocker, SLO County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jim Gentilucci, Associate Professor, School of Education, Cal Poly University, and Dr. Eric Prater, Superintendent, San Luis Coastal Unified School District. Dr. Crocker spoke first, congratulating the League on such a topical theme. President Obama held a meeting the day before, on February 16, with the leadership of the House and Senate to discuss the same issues.

As he outlined the history of the Federal government's involvement in local education, Dr. Crocker referred to the Preamble to the Constitution's statement about providing for the general welfare, as well as the 10th Amendment stating "Powers not given to the United States...are reserved for the States". Thus, except for township

surveys in the Northwest Compromise states, in which every 16th parcel was set aside for education, the Federal government had very little influence on local education for 150 years. It was considered a state and county matter through the early 20th Century.

As the waves of immigration continued into the United States and we turned from being an agrarian society to an urban society, a huge consolidation of schools took place. Dr. Crocker related that, in fact, SLO County which now has 10 school districts at one time had over 100! The audience chuckled when he explained that this history has been a boon to the wine industry as many of these old schoolhouses are now tasting rooms.

After WWII, the Federal School Lunch Program was initiated across the nation by President Truman feeling that too many draftees failed their physical exams because they were ill nourished. Also in the area of public health, nationwide school immunization programs were begun. This was clearly done in the interest of the general welfare of the citizenry, but by 1957 new criteria for federal influence in education was initiated. The forcible integration of Little Rock High School by federal troops introduced the concept of equity and our national reaction to the launching of Sputnik, the 1st Soviet artificial satellite in October of 1957, created the need for excellence in order to vie with global competition in the areas of defense and economics. Thus, President Eisenhower passed NDEA, the National Defense Education Act, the first in a long line of national legislative bills designed to improve our national education outcomes.

In an amazingly nonpartisan list, most presidents thereafter, have authorized study groups and legislation hoping to impact education. In 1964, President Johnson, initiated ESEA, which has been given a "new" focus and name and reauthorized by every president since then. Currently "No Child Left Behind", the education program of the G.W. Bush administration has been supplemented by "Race To The Top", President Obama's attempt to fine tune NCLB and eliminate some of the objections after eight years of implementation. The biggest shift in federal influence in NCLB was the move from scores that were accompanied by recommendations to

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scores that were leveraged with money. Since 10 to 15% of local school district money comes from the Federal government, this can be a significant amount and most districts feel the need to comply.

Dr. Jim Gentilucci then spoke specifically on the No Child Left Behind Act and how it works, considering both the positive and negative elements of the program. He began by recalling his own school days and the educational panic caused by Sputnik. Dr. Gentilucci feels the nation is in a similar mood now. We are anxiously looking for a better way, we know we need to improve, technology is replacing many traditional jobs. "Education has become a national defense issue, we can't have a first class economy with 2nd class schools", he proffered.

The accountability movement and the alphabet soup of accountability standards and programs officially came into being nationally with the introduction of No Child Left Behind in 2001. However, California preceded this act in 1999 with the California Public School Accountability Act which set up an API-Academic Performance Index, based on a perfect score of 800. The accountability mechanisms found in NCLB are based on AVP-Average Yearly Progress, Dr. Gentilucci went on to describe the vagaries of the API vs the AYP, leading to a system through which California schools hop in and out of compliance from year to year or can be satisfactory in one but not the other. The leverage for improvement in both Acts include manipulation of funds and a series of target goals that need to be met. If the target goals are not reached, a graduated series of sanctions follows that includes bringing in outside resources as well as writing a schoolwide improvement plan the first year and can be as punitive as removing the principal or changing the school's district after three years of failure to achieve the targeted levels.

Finally, Dr. Eric Prater discussed the ramifications of these policies and their implementation on the San Luis Coastal Unified School District for which he is superintendent. He has seen the consequences of No Child Left Behind have both positive and negative effects on his school district. The Federal Government role has settled into a focus on achievement and access as the multitude of data has come rolling in from the required testing in

NCLB. No Child Left Behind has forced districts to become accountable, but data doesn't tell the whole story, according to Dr. Prater, it can be a double edged sword.

As "Outcome Based Education", as it has come to be known, has continued since 1991, the focus has shifted to what kids are learning from the scope and sequence of learning. A question has to be asked, "Is education broken?" Many of the new programs for special education are not funded and the school district is left picking up the bill. In Dr. Prater's district \$2.5 million is taken from the General Fund to support the mandates in Special Education. The AYP scores of 4 out of 9 schools have been identified as needing program improvement. He considers these "PI" schools some of the best schools in terms of their culture of learning with some of the best teachers and best administrators on his staff. The testing program is great at creating data, yet the socio-economic truths behind it have been ignored: students in poverty, students with English as a 2nd language are not meeting the mark. They comprise a large percentage of the non-graduating students each year. Only 2% of English as a 2nd language students are graduating ready to go into the CSU system. The community has to come around these issues and take action.

In spite of some negatives, Dr Prater sees the Federal Government and the debate around the No child Left Behind Act as having a positive role in maintaining a focus on these issues and, in essence continuing to hold educator's feet to the fire. The national dialog has been reformed by all the data available for research and this has benefited the profession. In the future, 85% of the work force will require post secondary education. It is crucial that implementation not be clouded by politics. The data needs to be studied. Dr. Prater is implementing a 5 year plan to bring these understandings to the San Luis Coastal USD community beginning with a series of town meetings starting soon. He is betting that once you convince citizens to invest consistently in public schools, in both time and community treasure, you will get the kind of results for all students that were once reserved for affluent whites and Asians.

Dr. Crocker ended the evening's education discussion on a humorous note quoting Winston

Churchill, "America always does the right thing, after they have tried all the wrong things."

Biennial Convention and celebration of the organization's 90th anniversary.

Convention Plans Finalized Top Speakers Slated

The LWV of California Convention on **May 12-15** in Ventura has finalized their slate of speakers. Happily they were able to convince the new LWV national president, Elizabeth Mac Namara to make the trip west from Georgia where she lives. You, on the other hand, will have a much easier time traveling to our first "local" convention. If you don't want to stay overnight, consider just spending the day Saturday, however, pre-convention activities as well as working sessions begin Thurs, May 12. This is your chance to attend a League convention in your own backyard! Also speaking will be Dr. Beverly Kelly, a local educator/radio personality as well as **Katcho Achjadian, SLO county assemblyman**. Last month we profiled **Joe Mathews and Mark Paul, authors of California Crack-Up - How Reform Broke The Golden State and How We Can Fix It**. Both are California authors/educators/politicos familiar with the inner workings of our state.

There are rumors this year of **surprise speaker** of great interest to all, but the time is not yet right to make the announcement! Keep in touch with your convention blog site, www.lwvc.wordpress.com for all the latest news as well as directions on how to register both for the convention and at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Make your plans soon, you won't regret it.

Elisabeth MacNamara is the 18th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and chair of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). A longtime Dekalb County, Georgia resident, Ms. MacNamara was elected national League president in Atlanta during the League of Women Voters' 49th



Ms. MacNamara joined the League in 1983 and has since served in leadership roles at all levels—local, state and national. In 1983, she was invited to join the Board of directors of the League of Women of Georgia as the Courts/Criminal Justice chair. She served on the state Board until 1991, also serving as vice president for Program and as secretary. In 1984, she joined the Board of directors of the DeKalb League, serving as Courts/Criminal Justice chair, Education Committee chair, vice president, and secretary between 1984 and 1997. In 1997, she was president of the DeKalb League. Ms. MacNamara rejoined the Board of directors of the League of Women Votes of Georgia in 1999, and served as president of that Board beginning in 2001.

Professionally, Ms. MacNamara is an attorney, recently retired as deputy chief assistant district attorney in charge of the office's juvenile court division in DeKalb County. Prior to this promotion, she had served as assistant district attorney since 1986. Her interest in juvenile justice arose after years of volunteering for the public high school activities of her two sons, including mock trial, academic bowl, track, marching band and cross country. She has also served as a staff attorney for the National Center for State Courts and law clerk for the Superior Court of DeKalb County.

In addition to her decades-long volunteer service with the League, Ms. MacNamara has volunteered with the High School Mock Trial Program; the Band Parents Association of Lakeside High School; University of Georgia Parents and Families; and PTA.

Ms. MacNamara graduated from Emory University with a B.A. in 1976 and a J.D. in 1979. She is a proud member of Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa and Pi Delta Epsilon, and has lived in DeKalb County, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta, since 1974.

Our speaker on Friday will be accomplished professor, author, and commentator **Beverly Merrill Kelley, PhD**, Professor of Communication California Lutheran University. She will speak to us on the 100 year anniversary of California women having the right to vote.

Beverly Merrill Kelley, PhD., has taught communication courses in the department she founded at California Lutheran University for the past 34 years. She was elected Professor of the Year and helped to found both KCLU FM radio and Educational Television for the Conejo. Her writing career has included publishing the Reelpolitik series of books on film and politics, serving as a columnist for the Ventura County Star for the past 12 years, writing 36 "Ventura County Perspective" columns for the Los Angeles Times, and authoring a number of scholarly articles. She managed a California State Assembly campaign in 1999. She is frequently invited to speak at public events, moderate debates, and to provide election analysis for radio, television, and newspapers. She has also had the pleasure of hosting both radio and television shows in which she was able to interview best-selling authors, Pulitzer Prize winners, Hollywood entertainers, breakthrough scientists, jazz legends, business leaders, and politicians from Governor Gray Davis to Senator Barbara Boxer.



Celebration Committee Seeks League Help



The committee formed by our League to celebrate the 100-Year anniversary of California women securing the right to vote in San Luis Obispo County is off to a fast start. Twenty-four members and alternates from a cross section of county life-government, community organizations, political parties, education and historical societies- are making plans for celebrations throughout the year. Trudy Jarratt, 1st Vice President of LWVC, and a member of LWVSLOCo, is the committee chair and Katcho Achadjian, a long time member, is the honorary committee chair.

The committee met for the first time on January 27 and crafted their mission "To celebrate 2011 as the 100 year anniversary of California women securing the right to vote and raise awareness of the role San Luis Obispo County played in this historical event. Through our leadership we will provide inspiration to civic leaders and organizations across our county to commemorate the anniversary collectively and in every community."

Trudy came to our most recent board meeting on March 1, bringing lots of information and enthusiasm. She spoke of how positively the anniversary

Democracy is not a spectator sport

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celebration idea had been received all across the county and how she hoped the League would

continue to maintain a leadership role as more people joined the group. The Board of Supervisors and each of the 7 cities across the county have or will present resolutions proclaiming 2011 a year of celebration of the historic 100 year anniversary.

There are several opportunities for League members to be a part of this “historic coalition” and have memorable times as well.

At this time the committee is looking for volunteers to take part in three focus areas:

1. Events Subcommittee: Volunteers to identify and plan a series of events leading up to October 10, the anniversary of the election.
2. Speakers' Bureau: a few people who would be willing to go out with presentations on the History of Suffrage. Trudy Jarratt, Marilee Hyman and Historian Dick Miller would help create. School presentations are being considered too.
3. General Volunteers: There will be banners to make, perhaps some costumes to put together, viewpoint articles to write, letters to the editor to discuss what a wonderful historical event the 100 Year anniversary is.

Please contact Trudy at fjarratt@charter.net or call her at 489-1772 if you would like to be a part of this “once in a lifetime” opportunity.



STATE CONVENTION AND BEING A VOLUNTEER

Dates: Thursday May 13th - May 15th

As one this year’s “Host Leagues” you have a great opportunity to meet LWVC leaders and League members from around our state.

As a Volunteer:

- You will be able to observe a State Convention session of your choice.
- If you work thru Lunch, LWVC will provide you with a box lunch. In addition there will be a break room where coffee, soft drinks and treats will be furnished by LWVC
- You will be entitled to one free workshop of your choice.
- You might also consider registering for a banquet or one of the lunches, which feature speakers.

Check out wvc.wordpress.com for information on workshops available and banquet Speakers. You can also find VERY reasonable hotel rates available to League members at this link.

Some of the volunteer duties will include helping with registration, working the plenary as a mike monitor, teller, or door monitoring. Volunteers will also help with the workshops. All positions will come with training! You may volunteer for a day, two days or all three days.

This is probably a once in a lifetime event for our League and a chance for you to be part of it. Please consider participating. You may reach me at 805-534-1139 or email at aaupowers@charter.net if you would like to volunteer or if you have any questions.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Arlene Powers

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF CALIFORNIA

For Immediate Release
January 12, 2011

Contact: Trudy Schafer
916-442-7215; 916-705-1090 (c)
Elizabeth Leslie, 916-842-7737

League of Women Voters of California Praises Honest Approach to Budget Woes

Sacramento—The League of Women Voters of California applauds the balanced approach taken in the Governor's proposed budget. Recent years have shown that California's dire fiscal situation can't be adequately addressed without looking at both the revenue and the expenditure sides of the balance sheet. As the legislature responds and proposals are refined, we encourage everyone involved to approach these difficult discussions thoughtfully and with an open mind.

The proposed cuts are beyond painful—they are excruciating. While we know that expenditures need to be examined, the League is concerned that these cuts will further deteriorate essential safety-net programs as well as other programs throughout the budget.

"It's about time that we have a budget that works towards long-term solutions, rather than relying on one-time fixes and accounting gimmicks," said Janis R. Hirohama, LWVC President. "This budget faces up to the reality of California's structural deficit. California taxpayers want to be dealt with honestly and forthrightly."

The proposed extension of the current taxes is appropriate. It's impossible to deal with this size of a deficit without increased revenue. California voters have indicated they want services; voters should have a clear choice and a better opportunity to see what the consequences of not passing these taxes will be. We hope that the legislature agrees that the voters should have a chance for an up or down vote on this proposal.

The governor's budget includes major restructuring of some government programs to shift responsibility and control for many locally delivered services to local government. We will be closely following the discussion on realignment. One question that needs to be considered is how much money now provided by the state or passed through from the federal government will follow the responsibility.

Local governments differ in their ability or willingness to approve local taxes for services, which could mean distinct and perhaps inequitable differences in how well local funding would match local needs in the long run.

"There will be difficult debates to come over the governor's proposals, but at least we are finally facing up to hard reality," said Hirohama. "The picture painted by the governor's budget isn't pretty, but it is an honest one."



LWVSLO BOARD MEMBERS 2010-2011

2010-2011 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION League of Women Voters of SLO County

Name: Address: City: Zip: Phone: *E-mail (*Very Important)

Do not include this information in League Directory

Please select your class of Membership:

A voting member is at least 18 and a citizen.

Annual dues:

- \$60.00 Individual annual membership
\$85.00 Two Member Household
\$30.00 Associate member (under 18 or not a citizen)
Please contact me. I need to apply for assistance to pay for membership.

I've included an additional contribution of \$

Make payment to:

League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County (LWVSLOCo) P.O. Box 4210, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403

Thank you for your support!

Membership in the LWVSLOCo entitles you to national, state, and local membership in the league. Membership extents from July 1 of any calendar year through June 30 of the next year.

The League is nonpartisan. We do not support or oppose candidates. Join us. Add your voice to the work of the most respected and effective grassroots organization in this country.

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LWVC Management
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