

Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY

March/April 2010

President's Message

Thank you for renewing your membership and a special thanks to those who added a little extra for our education fund! For nine decades the League has empowered voters to make a difference by providing nonpartisan information on important issues. You made the right choice to continue to support our organization by protecting our most effective tool ---the VOTE!

In our last Voter you were asked to complete a Program Planning Survey and select the national and local issues that are important to you. The purpose of the survey was to review public policy positions and decide where the League should focus its resources and time. Read about the results as you scroll down.

Join us at the lake! Due to rainy weather, the membership brunch was rescheduled to April . This is our gift to you for supporting the League of Women Voters of Kern County. Mark your calendar and join us for brunch on Saturday, April 17 from 10 am to noon at the home of David and Terri Stanton 5107 Outlook Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

State-wide primary elections are June 8, 2010. The Kern County League and California Women League (formerly CEWAR) will co-host a candidates' forum for the local assembly district on May 4 at California State University Bakersfield. Check out the League website for more details in April.

You will be able to view information about the candidates running for national and state seats on SmartVoter.Org beginning in April. Visit the site from time to time as new candidates are added each week. The SmartVoter is a nonpartisan one-stop shop for election information by county and state. Citizens cannot only access their personal ballot including polling location but can register to vote on the SmartVoter website, also.

Please join us at our March and April general meetings.—Diane Williams

Calendar

March 9—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVWC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room USC-3.

March 17—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. General meeting at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California

Avenue with CSUB assistant professor of sociology Dr Doreen Anderson-Facile and two of her colleagues speaking about prison reform and recidivism. Cost is \$22.

Reservations

required by noon, March 15. Call the League Line for reservation.*

April 13—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVWC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room USC-3.

April 17—Saturday, 10 am to noon. Annual Membership Appreciation Brunch at the home of

Terri and David Stanton, 5107 Outlook Lane. Boat rides will be available. No cost for the

brunch. The League thanks its members for ongoing support. Call the League Line for reservation.*

April 21—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. Brenda Baldwin of PG&E will discuss alternate energy at the

April general meeting at the Petroleum Club. Cost is \$22. Reservations required by noon,

April 19. Call the League Line for reservation.*

May 26—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. **ANNUAL MEETING** with keynote speaker Kern County Chief

Deputy District Attorney Lisa Green. (note change of date) Petroleum Club. Watch for further info in the next Voter and online.

Reminder: General meetings are usually on the third Wednesday of the month. If you need transportation to a meeting, please leave that message on the League Line.

Reservations are required for dinner and luncheon meetings and special events. Please call the League Line, 634-3773, by Monday noon prior to the Wednesday event. No charge for attendance at program only. Thank you.

CSUB professors discuss prison reform in California

Dr. Doreen Anderson-Facile, Assistant Professor of Sociology at CSUB, and two of her colleagues will present a program on prison reform at the March 17 general meeting at the Petroleum Club. Dr. Anderson-Facile will discuss the basic challenges to prisoner reentry, and list reasons why post-release prisoners often end up back in prison. Dr. Anthony Flores and Dr. Charlene Taylor-Kindrick will speak about the extent of prison problems in California. They will also discuss ways to solve problems facing the California penal system.

Dr. Doreen Anderson-Facile serves as Director of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center. She received her Ph.D. from UC Riverside in 2003. In addition to authoring a book in 2007, she published an article in "Sociological Compass" titled *Basic Challenges to Prisoner Reentry*. Her teaching and research areas focus on crime, juvenile delinquency, and deviant behavior.

Anthony Flores is a lecturer in Criminal Justice. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Cincinnati. He provides technical assistance with offender risk and needs assessment, case planning, and effective rehabilitative programming at all governmental levels. Mr. Flores teaches undergraduate level courses in areas related to prison reform. Recent publication topics include risk/needs assessment and effective rehabilitative strategies for both juvenile and adult offender populations.

Dr. Charlene Taylor-Kindrick earned her Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. As an Assistant Professor at Portland State University, she received a gubernatorial appointment to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee and served as the chair. She has provided technical assistance to Correction Departments in many states. Most recently, she worked with the Los Angeles County Probation on developing correctional program evaluation tools.

Do plan to meet and speak with this impressive trio of presenters from CSUB. The dinner meeting begins at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. Cost of the dinner is \$22. Call the League Line for reservations, 634-3773. Those who wish to attend only the program at no cost are encouraged to come.—Barbara Lovell

Alternative energy is April topic

Brenda Baldwin, representing the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, will speak at the April 21 general meeting. She will discuss solar energy, wind energy, and other current alternative energy projects in which PG & E is participating.

A Bakersfield native, Brenda has been employed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company since 1983. She graduated magna cum laude from CSUB with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and, during her 26-year career with PG&E, has served in a wide variety of challenging, customer-focused roles. Currently she is a Senior Account Executive responsible for promoting energy efficiency and renewable self-generation to many of Kern County's largest commercial, industrial and agricultural customers. League members may recognize Brenda because she has appeared in many local musical productions in Bakersfield.

The meeting is at 5:45 p.m. at the Petroleum Club. Please call the League Line for reservations. Cost of the dinner is \$22. Those who would like to attend only the program at no cost are welcome.—Lynne Rosenstein

**Remember the dues statement
you received in the mail?**

It is not too late to pay 2010 dues.

**Please do your part and send your check
payable to LWKC to**

**League of Women Voters of Kern County
PO Box 132, Bakersfield CA 93302**

YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED.

THANK YOU!

January planning meeting results

The LWV's national and state positions are reviewed in alternative years to ensure that the League can act on legislative priorities. This grass root effort is an opportunity for League members to influence the selection of the issues by deciding where the League should focus time, talent and resources.

This year we simplified the process by asking members to complete a short survey, selecting national and local issues under the headings of Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. This information was used to choose the top three issues which were then discussed and voted on at the Program Planning meeting held in January. We received 17 surveys which represents just under ten percent of our membership. The survey results of the issues with the highest votes were Campaign Finance, Selection of the President, and Air Quality. At the local level the issues were Education, Environment, and Transportation.

During the Program Planning meeting table leaders facilitated two rounds of small group discussions. Participants voted on national and local topics at the end of each round. The group was instructed to vote on one national issue and two local issues. Selection of the president—the abolishment of the electoral college—received the top national vote. Education and Transportation received the top votes at the local level.

Recommendations from the floor were Health Care, Abolish Term Limits, Education, and Water impacting Kern County. All recommendations will be brought to the May Annual Meeting for final confirmation.—Diane Williams

Too many strings to education grants

California has taken the necessary steps to qualify for the federal education grant money. However, many school districts have chosen not to participate. That includes all districts in the city of Bakersfield as well as many outlying districts. The reason given for non-participation is that the federal government attaches too many strings to the grant. Additionally, these funds are one-time

money only, which means that neither on-going programs nor salaries may be included in expenditures.

The Kern High School District has offered retirement incentives to employees who announced their retirements by January 31. Several employees have taken advantage of this opportunity. This is done in the hope of defraying any layoffs. The faculty association and the District have still not reached a contract. Therefore, the old contract remains in effect.

The state's budget deficit through 2011 is projected to be \$19.9 billion. It may be worse. The Governor's solution is continued budget cuts. He proposes a re-benching of Proposition 98 moneys downward. This could mean a local cut of \$568 million for K-12 education.

The Bakersfield City School District plans on continued reductions, increases in student/staff ratios, reduction of special programs, and limitations on summer school. It plans to deal proactively with the budget.—Terri Stanton

More information on redistricting

The following is a continuation of material presented in the previous issue of the Voter about the redistricting process.

Question: How does the reform process work?

Answer: A Citizen's Redistricting Commission, politically balanced, will be chosen for impartiality, skills and diversity. Commission meetings will be held around the state. Districts will be drawn for State Assembly, Senate and the Board of Equalization.

Question: What will the mapping criteria be?

Answer: Districts will have equal population, be geographically contiguous, compact and favor no politician or political party.

Question: Who handles the application process?

Answer: The State Auditor will receive and filter applications for potential candidates. The Auditor will create a pool of 60 candidates of which state legislators may strike up to 24 candidates. The State Auditor conducts a

random drawing from the reduced pool to select the initial 8 commissioners. The initial 8 commissioners then select the final 6 commissioners from the remaining members of the pool.

Question: How does the Commission operate?

Answer: The Commission organizes itself, hires staff, begins planning for the entire redistricting process. Federal census data is received and processed while initial maps are drawn, reviewed and authorized for publication. Final vote of the Commission to adopt district maps requires the vote of 3 Democrats, 3 Republicans and 3 others to be determined.

Question: What can League members do to help?

Answer:

Act as observers at Commission meetings.

Explain the process and its importance to the community.

With other community groups, testify before the Commission about proposed redistricting maps.

Use our website and the Voter to communicate information about the census and redistricting.

Use letters to the editor, blogs and social network sites to inform the community.

The Commission on Redistricting will consist of five Republicans, five Democrats, and four persons who are members of neither party. The Commission must represent California's geographic, racial and gender make-up.

Nearly 17,000 Californians have submitted applications including our own Terri Stanton and Michelle Turner. The deadline for submitting applications was February 12.—Dee Whitley

Legislative interviews underway

Throughout the state of California, League members interview their state legislators every year. This is an opportunity for legislators to share their

priorities with us and to learn about League positions and priorities. We, in turn, learn more about the legislators and gain information useful in planning our activities. Legislative interviews are particularly important because League visibility is increased and the members of the Legislature become more aware of our interest in the legislation they will be considering.

Our Kern County League has begun this interview process, having already met with Assemblyman Danny Gilmore on February 5. Interviews are scheduled with Assemblyman Dean Florez for March 12 and with Assemblywoman Jean Fuller on April 30.

If you are interested in participating in these interviews on behalf of LWVKC, please contact me at 397-1631, or mmt57@pacbell.net.—Michelle Turner

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION BRUNCH

Saturday, April 17, 10 am to noon

at the home of Terri and David Stanton, 5107 Outlook Lane in Riverlakes

The League appreciates all its members and thanks them for renewing their support.

Of course, there is no charge for the brunch.

Boat rides will be available. Call the League Line for reservation.*

STAY INFORMED

For current up-dated information, check the local, state, and national League of Women Voters' websites:

www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org

www.ca.lwv.org

www.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of Kern County

PO Box 132

Bakersfield, CA 93302

League Line (661) 634-3773

e-mail diane.williams.cht5@statefarm.com

Diane Williams, President

Barbara Lovell, 1st Vice President

Michelle Turner, 2nd Vice President

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Lynne Rosenstein, Voter Editor

Directors

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