



Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY December 2010/January 2011

Mark Your Calendars! January 19th's League Planning Meeting. Free Dinner! Interesting Discussions! See pp. 2 for more details, 7/8 for survey.

State League President Will Speak at December 15th Meeting

December is traditionally a time of gift-giving and our local league will be the happy recipient of a major gift when Janis Hirohama, President of the LWV of California, is our guest speaker on Wednesday, December 15. She will talk about the future of the League and discuss issues currently on the state's agenda. Please bring your friends to this meeting; it is not often that we are fortunate enough to have a state president visit Bakersfield.

Janis was elected President of the LWVC in 2007. Born in Japan on a U.S. Army base as a third generation Sansei, she is the first woman of color to head the state League. She is a member of the LWV Beach Cities and has been a League member since 1994. Janis has held leadership positions on the local, state, and national levels of the organization. From 2000 to 2004 she served on the Board of Directors of the LWV United States—two years as a board member and two years as First Vice President. She served on the LWVC Board as secretary from 1998-2000.

For the LWVC she also coordinated the *Building the Future* membership incentive program and served on the Diversity Task Force. Janis is a past president of the LWV Beach Cities (1997-1998), where she also served as Voter Service Director, Speakers Bureau Coordinator and Outreach Director. She has been a facilitator and speaker at diversity workshops at the local, state, ILO, and national levels of League. (continued on p. 4)

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President's Message

Now that the elections are behind us, we will keep a close watch on the how the legislatures will handle the steady record unemployment numbers, underfunded educational systems, healthcare, immigration and many other issues. So, what issues are you concerned about? Where do you want the League to focus efforts?

Come have **dinner on us**, learn about the issues, and help decide where the League should focus its time, talent and money. Join us for the Program Planning meeting on January 19, 2010 at 6:30 at UC Merced. At this traditional grassroots meeting, each member has the opportunity to influence the selection of issues and direct the League on the issues of education, advocacy and legislative priorities. This process starts with a committee reviewing the state and local positions and recommending the top three issues under Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy. A League position is established after members have studied an issue and achieved consensus on policies and practices that best service the public interest. Once this position is adopted, we can take action such as lobbying, legislative testimony, and ballot measure campaigns. To focus our discussion on the top issues, **please complete and return the survey inside.**

Thank you for being a member of our organization! Your support has helped us fight for:

At the National level -

advocated for legislation of fair and clean elections that will enhance disclosure and fix the public financing system for presidential candidates;

called on thousands to take action in communities across the US in October, 2010, to address climate change by uniting like-minded folks around solutions to the climate crises.

At the State level –

passed the Voters First Act (proposition 11) creating California's first 14 member Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw the lines for state district boundaries. Now expanded to include congressional districts as passed in the 2010 election;

testified at informational hearings to Senate and Assembly appointed committees as part of reform to improve State Government.

It is your support that allows us to fight and hold legislators accountable. Renew your membership! Your annual dues allow the League to educate and advocate on critical issues, present candidate forums, and provide free publications to educate voters. Send in your membership dues today and continue to stay informed!

Will Kern County Have the Funding to meet Transportation Needs?

Kern County continues to face funding difficulties to address the backlog of transportation maintenance and future road needs. The Kern Transportation Foundation and forum partners featured a panel of transportation experts to highlight the urgency of transportation issues facing our county and available funding from federal and state agencies. The theme of the meeting was funding Kern's Transportation System. It was held at the Doubletree Hotel on November 17.

Ted James, AIC, Director, Kern County Development Services Agency started the program with a historic journey of the evolution of roads. He continued with how history may repeat itself by governments going back to the basic transportation funding of user fees and toll roads to fund transportation as opposed to the gas tax. As cars become more fuel efficient, the amount of gas tax is steadily decreasing. Ted shared that the economic impact has reduced available funds for transportation from the county general fund and impact fees. And for three years Kern County has not received funding from the state for transportation. Ted stressed that Kern County needs to become a self-help county to be a major player for matching dollars.

The GET has new fuel efficient buses! We heard from Karen King, CEO, Golden Empire Transit on the exciting new Ride and Park partnership with Tejon and how ridership and gas prices are up causing a slight increase in fees.

Ron Brummet, Executive Director, Kern Cog, shared the Blueprint Vision of Kern County and the importance of integrating local and regional plans for sustainability. He also stressed the need for exploring other transportation funding.

We also heard from Martin Wachs, Ph.D., Director, RAND, and Barry Hibbard, Principal, Central Valley Investment, on the economics of transportation and future options. The panel shared the economic impact of passing ½% sales tax and how it will be protected with the passing of Proposition 22 which protects transportation funds in the counties. Barry shared the potential financial opportunity the Tejon Project will bring to Kern County by using this as an export hub for outbound transport of goods. We are centrally located and have the I-5 freeway and rail system to do this. BSF Railway has invested a large amount of money in this project. Stay tuned.

Columnist Dan Walters ended the forum sharing historic articles and experiences regarding the evolution of the transportation.

Have YOU Renewed Your Membership?

It's that time again! If you haven't renewed your membership in the Kern County League of Women Voters, now is the time to do it! While you're at it, invite a friend to join, too. Contact Lois Watson at 872-0634 if you didn't get your renewal letter or need a membership form for your friend.

Carbon Capture and Sequestering

Kern County has been at the center of California's energy production since the early 1900's with the discovery of oil, followed by power generating wind turbines, cogeneration plants, and solar panels. Currently, Kern County produces 76% of the oil and 60% of the natural gas in California. HECA (Hydrogen Energy and Southern California Edison) is building a gas burning electric power plant that will capture and sequester CO₂ under the ground.

The process consists of capturing the carbon in the smoke stack, treating under extreme pressure to liquefy it, and pumping it deep under ground. The west side of Kern County is ideal for this process as there are depleted oil wells 3,000 feet deep in which to place the liquid CO₂. The increased pressure will force more oil through the rock to be pumped up by other oil wells.

How safe is this process? Occidental Oil has been using CO₂ for oil recovery since 1972 and currently has 25 different projects. CO₂ does not burn (Think dry ice and fire extinguishers). Oil wells are drilled far below the westside aquifer which has a salinity rate greater than 10,000 per milliliter and not usable for most human activities.

This project will bring high paying jobs; low carbon produced electricity; GHG emission reduction; extend the life of a mature oil field; make us less dependent on foreign oil and bring more tax revenue into Kern County.

This information was obtained at the Carbon Capture and Sequester Forum held on October 1st at California State University, Bakersfield.

-Lois Watson

State League President (cont. from p. 1)

Janis serves on the Steering Committee for the California Judicial Council's Commission on Impartial Courts. She has appeared as a speaker or panelist at a variety of public policy forums and events, including the Pat Brown Institute's California Policy Issues Conference and the Public Policy Institute of California's "Crisis in Confidence" forum.

An attorney, Janis has an A.B. in history from Washington University in St. Louis and a J.D. from the New York University School of Law. She is admitted to the bar in California and New York. Her areas of professional expertise include voting rights, criminal law, and fairness education. She lives in Manhattan Beach with her husband, Jim Pollard, who is also a League member. According to her bio on the California League website, Janis enjoys reading, travel, and genealogy in her spare time. It is difficult to imagine that this very active woman has much spare time!

The meeting begins at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. Cost of the dinner is \$22. Those wishing to attend only the program are invited to do so. The program will begin at approximately 6:30 pm. Reservations are required by noon on December 13. Please RSVP by the League Line, 634-3773, or by e-mail to Patti Jepsen: patti.jepsen.ak8b@statefarm.com.-Lynne Rosenstein

Kern County League Leaders Attend Regional Workshop

The California League of Women Voters held a Regional Workshop on September 25th in Fresno for the purpose of presenting League studies done in the areas of Redistricting, Water Bond, and LWV Advocacy. Attending from KCLWV were Patti Jepsen, Lois Watson and Dee Whitley. Bonnie Hamlin, LWVC Member Services Director, and Francine Farber, President LWV Fresno County, welcomed and addressed the attendees.

Helen Hutchinson, LWVC 2nd VP, spoke about "What League and the Public Can Do to Help the New Process of Redistricting Succeed". League encourages the formation of a local Observer Corps and Media Watch by League members to attend Redistricting Commission meetings. Transparency needs to be ensured, and League will issue a report card of how well the process is working. In attendance was a Commission candidate finalist, Teresa Espana, who answered questions as to the Commission selection process.

A panel discussion entitled "Water - Deeper Than You Think!" took place including Roberta Borgonovo, LWVC Water Program Director; Robert Merrill, Ph.D., Professor of Earth and Environmental Science, CSUF; and David Cehrs, At Large Director, Kings River Conservation District. Workshop attendees listened with alarm as the panel described the serious problems of water storage and shortage in relation to population growth and land development. League supports the formation of water forums to study water issues and supply updates to voters.

California State LWV President Janis Hirohama rounded out the workshop by reminding League members of the Principles of Advocacy. LWV speaks with one voice. As a grassroots organization, one voice strengthens the League's ability to act. Positions are based on Core Principles of study, consensus and careful deliberation. Ballot measures are studied with intensity and League positions of support, opposition, no position, and neutral are rendered only after careful deliberation. Janis reminded us to look for and ask for League Email alerts on important issues. –Dee Whitley

“Active Participation” Normal Part of Member’s Life

Pam Baugher, “VOTER” editor, joined the LWVKC in 2009 after retiring from a 40 year teaching career with Bakersfield City School District. A self-professed political junky, she always appreciated what the League stood for and did for the community. However, she held off from joining as Pam didn't have the time to commit to the organization.

In addition to teaching, Pam was involved with her school's booster club and School Site Council. She participated in many District committees. Her greatest commitment was to Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association/California Teachers Association/National Education Association (BETA/CTA/NEA). Starting off as a site representative, she was eventually honored to serve as BETA President for four years. Pam continued to participate in, and often chair, various committees such as Bargaining and Political Action. Pam served as Treasurer and Chair of CTA's local Sierra Service Center Council for 6 years and CTA's State Council for 9 years representing BETA. She is also a member of several of CTA's training cadres, including Women's Leadership Training Programs and Campaigning to Win. Pam was also a state or local delegate to the NEA annual Representative Assembly over 10 years.

Since retiring, Pam has joined CTA-Retired, Kern Retired Teachers Association, KCLWV and thoroughly enjoys not having any papers to grade. She has taken on varying degrees of leadership roles in all three organizations, but has been most active in League functions. (cont. on p. 7)

California's Budget and Education

The Governor has now signed into law a 2010-2011 state budget—exactly 100 days into the new budget year. The effects of this budget on education are yet to be completely determined, but we can arrive at some likely outcomes.

K-12 education was spared, at least temporarily, cuts below the level proposed by the Governor in May. By converting the Governor's proposed \$1.7 billion revenue limit cut into a \$1.7 billion April-May apportionment deferral, the enacted budget will provide schools with additional funding of approximately \$345 per ADA. It must be emphasized that this is an "on paper increase" since \$295 per ADA of this augmentation will not be received by schools districts until the 2011-12 fiscal year. In other words, most of the funds are deferred and will not be available this school year.

Additionally, the Proposition 98 Constitutional Funding Guarantee has been suspended. This law guaranteed schools a constant 40+% of the state income revenue. However, it may be suspended in bad economic times, as it has been with this budget. The funding will be paid back to schools at some future date.

The biggest issue with the budget is that it is not based on reality. Since much of the money coming from the state will be deferred until the following school year, school district reserves are severely diminished, and the cash flow for school districts is simply not there. It is clear that greater fiscal problems lie ahead, and most districts simply cannot sustain services with the current budget. Furthermore, there is a very real possibility of mid-year funding cuts.

Since most schools districts spend 80+% of their money on personnel, they have arrived at the point where there is no more cutting to be made in areas outside of this one. Therefore, the only thing left to cut is people. Districts try to make these cuts as far away from the classroom as possible, but they are getting closer and closer to cutting there (if they have not already done so).

No school employees have had a raise in three years. They are being asked to pick up a larger portion of the benefits they have, primarily health care. By law, school districts may not charge students for services.

There is no doubt that these cuts have greater ramifications for the poor. It is these students who most need services beyond the basic academics, and the future looks bleak for restoration of those areas (arts, extra-curricular activities, etc.)

Based on calculations, K-14 education continues to take a disproportionate level of the budget cuts that have been enacted and sustained since February, 2009. K-14 education represents about 50% of all cuts even though it is only 40% of the state budget. When we factor in the loss of \$7.7 billion in budget solutions since 2009 that have never been realized, K-14 provides almost 60% of the solutions.

With new budget deficit figures for California released on November 11, the prediction is that simply keeping schools at their current funding level will push the state further into debt. At this point, no options have been discussed. The future of educational funding for California is bleak. -Terri Stanton

"Active Participation" (cont. from p. 5)

Pam particularly enjoyed the high school registration project. Running into former students at some of the schools was a special treat. She also assisted with voter registration at other venues and helped deliver voter guides before the June and November elections. She took over as "VOTER" editor with the gracious assistance of former editor Lynne Rosenstein with the Aug/Sept edition.

November 2, Pam was elected to the Bakersfield City School District Governing Board after running a strong campaign. She will be sworn in on December 7 and hopes to help improve the learning environment for children in spite of difficult financial times for public education.

Pam says she couldn't have done any of these things well without the support of her husband of 41 years, Fred. From helping raise their two daughters, Jennifer and Michelle, to driving his pickup covered in campaign signs around town during lunch and "rush" hours, he's been there for her. They have one grandson, James, and enjoy doing things with their core and extended families.

Selected Excerpts from National LWV Newsletter

I couldn't be prouder of the League this election season. During my pre-election travel to nine states, I saw firsthand the incredible work by our grassroots — registering tens of thousands of new voters, providing nonpartisan candidate information through millions of printed and online voters' guides, and holding hundreds of candidate debates seen and heard by thousands.

Post-election, two major election players demand our immediate attention: [secret money and incivility](#). This year voters were overwhelmed by millions of dollars in negative ads, but didn't know who paid for many of them. [League members nationwide have been calling on their elected officials to support the DISCLOSE Act](#), which would require corporations and unions to disclose the dollars they spend influencing our elections.

The League will continue to address the other major issue— incivility. The tone of the 2010 campaign exhibited a disturbing new low in American politics. Not only was this evident in the costly advertising; we also saw it in candidate debates and forums and in the public discourse.

Election 2010 is behind us, but more important work is ahead of us! As 2011 approaches, do stay in touch with the League and me through my [blog](#) and [Facebook](#).



Elisabeth MacNamara
President, LWVUS

Election 2010 and Beyond

[National Voter Registration Act Victory in Arizona](#)

In a [major decision](#) the week before Election Day, a federal appeals court invalidated Arizona's requirement for proof-of-citizenship in order to register to vote. The three-judge panel, with Sandra Day O'Connor "sitting by designation," agreed with the League's [amicus brief](#) that the requirement violates the National Voter Registration Act.

[Beyond Election Day: Young People Getting Involved in Democracy](#)

Just days before Election Day, the League hosted [a forum](#) to discuss the trends that impact youth civic participation. League members, leaders in civic engagement and young people turned out to participate in this discussion. Post election reports indicate young people turned out to vote in numbers comparable to past midterm elections. Much more needs to be done to empower youth, especially the underrepresented, so our October 28 conversation is a helpful springboard for broader youth engagement activities. Protect and Strengthen the Congressional Ethics Office

With unprecedented levels of secret money spent in our elections this year, now is not the time to weaken oversight of congressional ethics. Yet the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) is under attack. ABC News cites the League's call to Congress not to shut down the OCE in ["Are GOP Leaders Quietly Trying to Axe Office of Congressional Ethics?"](#)

October: Busy Month for LWVKC Voter Service

Voter Service is one of the most important purposes of the League. This year the local League registered an extraordinary amount of voters. It started in the spring with the participation in the National League's high school student registration project. League members carried on through the summer and fall with tables at events as diverse as Farmers' Markets, Viva Mexico, and the Kern County Fair. It ended on the last day to register for the November election with a two day event at the Albertson's store located at Chester and Brundage Lane.

Voter Guides were also distributed. Recognizing that we are the LWV of Kern County, guides were personally delivered by League members or mailed to all of the Senior Nutrition Centers in our county in addition to the traditional Bakersfield sites. Thanks to all who donated their time and effort to helping citizens participate in the most fundamental right and responsibility of being an American, voting

LWVKC Financial Statements for Fiscal July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

The Balance Sheet and Statement of Activity for the fiscal year of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 are printed here for your perusal. If you have any questions, please contact the League Line at (661)634-3773. Thank you.

Submitted by Patti Jepsen, Treasurer.

BALANCE SHEET JULY 1, 2009 TO JUNE 30, 2010

Bank Accounts

Certificate of Deposit	30,001.82
Union Bank of California	4,316.08
WestAmerica Bank	66.69
Total Bank Accounts	34,384.59

Cash Account **70.00**

Asset Accounts

Education Fund	605.29
Media System	820.38
Total Asset Accounts	1,425.67

Liability Accounts

Bills Payable	-749.4
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Overall Total **35,130.86**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY**JULY 1, 2009 TO JUNE 30, 2010****INCOME**

Membership Dues	6,550
Mystery Box	33
Program: Annual Meeting	822
PROGRAM: General Meetings	2,741
TOTAL 4 - PROGRAM INCOME	3,564
Certificate of Deposit Deferred Interest	904
Grant Funding: High School Voter Registration	1,840
Voter Advertising	500
Other INCOME	28
Kern City Elections	50
TOTAL INCOME	13,468

EXPENSES

National Convention	1,726
State Convention	590
Other EDUCATION	50
LWVCA - State PMP	2,620
LWVUS National PMP	3,747
Other MEMBERSHIP	55
Bank Service Charge	109
Check Order	10
Communication	126
Filing Fee	30
Board Training	396
Membership Growth & Development	103
League Growth	25
Miscellaneous	57
News Letter - The Voter	533
Equipment Repairs	48
Postage	77
Post Office Box	40
Printing and Reproduction	321
Annual Meeting	581
General Meetings	2,284
Women's Equality Day	462
Women's Conference	75
Program Expenses	70
Storage Fees	807
League Line Telephone	362
Web Site	160
Misc. Operating Expenses	324
TOTAL EXPENSES	15,788

OVERALLTOTAL**NET GAIN** **-2,320**

Apologies to Our Sponsors!

It was with the best intentions that we planned to have our sponsor page “cleaned up” and more readable. Due to technical difficulties, we couldn’t accomplish that goal with this issue. We hope our sponsors will accept our deepest apologies. We should have this problem resolved by our next issue.

KCLWV Welcomes Back Member

Lois Watson, membership, is pleased to welcome back a former member to our local league. Please add the name to your membership booklet.

Mary Helen Barro

League of Women Voters of Kern County

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Bakersfield, CA 93302

League Line (661) 634-3773

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

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Michelle Turner, 1st Vice President

Lynne Rosenstein, 2nd Vice President

Margo Perry, Secretary

Patti Jepsen Treasurer

Pam Baugher, Voter Editor

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Lois Watson Patti Ashby

Irene Heath Tracey La Monica

Terri Stanton Dee Whitley

The LWVKC in both its values and practices affirms its belief in the commitment to diversity and pluralism.

Voting membership is open to all citizens of voting age (18 years); associate membership is open to non-citizens and citizens under the age of 18. Our activities in the community are open to everyone.

STAY INFORMED!

www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org

www.ca.lwv.org

www.lwv.org

* **www.smartvoter.org**

* **www.easyvoter.org**

* **www.cavotes.org**

* Election resources

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Kern Voter

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

Meet Janis Hirohama, President of LWV California December 15

Calendar

December 14 -- Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St., Rm. USC 3, 2nd floor.

December 15 –Wednesday, 5:45 pm. General Meeting. Janis Hirohama, President of LWVC, speaker. Dinner is \$22. Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. No cost for attendance at program only. Reservations due by noon Dec. 13.

December 24—Deadline to return Planning Meeting Surveys. Mail to LWVKC, P.O. Box 132, Bakersfield, CA 93302.

January 11 Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St., Rm. USC 3, 2nd floor.

January 19—Wednesday, 6:30 pm, 2011 Program Planning Meeting, UC Merced Center, 2000 K St., Rm. TBA. Help plan League's focus areas. Free dinner. Reservations due by noon, Monday, January 17.

February 8 - Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St., Rm. USC 3, 2nd floor.

February – General Meeting to be announced.

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 at 661 634-3773, by Monday noon prior to the Wednesday event. No charge for attendance at program only.

Thank you