



**THE SACRAMENTO VOTER**  
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

JANUARY 2010

**COME TO THE  
NEW MEMBER COFFEE!**

Get acquainted with Board members  
and hear about projects & plans

January 23, 2010, 10:0 AM to 12 noon  
4900 Monterey Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

RSVP by e-mail to [lwvs@lwvsacramento.org](mailto:lwvs@lwvsacramento.org) or  
call (916) 214-1152

**SAVE THE DATE**

Leadership Council 2010, scheduled for Sacramento Friday, May 14 through Sunday, May 16. All interested Sacramento members are welcome to attend.

**2009-2010**

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Happy New Year!** We hope this issue of the Voter finds you in good health and prepared to enjoy and participate in League activities.

**Program Planning**

Since the 1980 Census, demographic projections have advised that our population would look different in a variety of ways; families would have fewer children, our population of senior citizens would grow, people would marry at a later age, and immigration would add diversity to our communities, making California one of the most multi-cultural states in the union. As League members, we often ask ourselves how we can make a difference, how can we best reach and inform our fellow Sacramentans to encourage voting behavior and civic involvement. Building on this, we welcome all members' participation in the Program Planning meeting scheduled for February 20, 2010 at the USC State Capital Center. We ask that participants consider where there is the most need, where we will be most effective, and what activities best serve our mission. To optimize our limited resources, we ask that our focus be on areas in which we can have the greatest impact: Democracy, Voting and Civic Engagement. Of course, we welcome any issue that deals with League interests. To prepare for the meeting, members may want to review LWVC Stands on Issues at [ca.lwv.org/lwvc/issues](http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/issues) and LWVUS Issues, <http://www.lwv.org>.

**Unit Meetings**

Concerns about our state's economic viability and proposals for change have driven the two prior months' unit meeting discussions. This month's unit meetings will focus on yet another aspect of our economic future: investment in an educated workforce, and how well we are doing in sending students to college.

All members are welcome to attend Board meetings, which are held 5:30 P.M. at the League office the fourth Monday of each month. If you have an item for the agenda, please give one week's advance notice.

## **WATER QUALITY A PERSISTENT AND PERVASIVE ISSUE**

By Rick Bettis

Water quality has been a concern for more than 5500 years, when early civilizations first started building facilities to carry away harmful wastes. Historical studies indicate that more lives have been saved due to these efforts than advances in the medical practices. Many laws and regulations have been passed and adopted and billions of dollars spent to clean our waters, however problems still persist. Water quality is not only important to human health; it is now recognized for its impact on nature.

In the Sacramento area, the most significant water quality issue is the contamination of underground water at existing or former industrial and military sites such as at the Aerojet and Douglas aerospace facilities, the McClellan and Mather Air Force Bases, and the former rail yards. The contaminated groundwater has necessitated the closure of numerous water supply wells and the implementation of remediation programs that may require more than 100 years to complete. These problems have occurred due to the unregulated disposal of toxic chemicals used in fuels, solvents, and other industrial materials. Another important issue is mercury in our rivers, a result of its use for gold mining. Mercury accumulates in aquatic life, potentially making fish unsafe to eat. Naturally occurring arsenic has been detected in water wells, and significant stream pollution can result from storm runoff that carries pollutants such as pesticides and oils from streets, yards and fields.

There are many technical, service, monitoring and regulatory agencies to which we can file complaints or obtain information. These include: City and County Utilities; Municipal Services; Environmental Management Departments; Public Health Departments; the State of California's Water Quality Control, Health Services, Toxic Substances Control, Water Resources, and Fish and Game Departments; and Federal Environmental Protection, Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Geological Services, and Fish and Wildlife agencies.

## **HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION STUDY**

The League of Women Voters of Sacramento County was contacted by the LWVUS and asked if we would participate in a study of best practices. Focusing on urban high schools, we would provide voting registration orientations to eligible students in classrooms or to assemblies of students. The Board of the Sacramento League approved our participation in this voter service activity, and we notified the national League of our interest. Of course, we would need volunteers to conduct this voter education study, and would first provide an orientation to interested League volunteers. More information will be provided as this project evolves.

## HOMELESS YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA

By Alice Ginosar

"Homeless Youth. Please take a moment to think about the absurdity of it. How does a young person, who has not even grown into full adulthood, end up without a safe, stable place to live? Where are the parents, the schools, the extended family, the social safety net? What could possibly have happened for such a massive failure to occur so early in a young person's life? How can we stop accepting homelessness among youth and begin responding as if they were our own children?"

This heartbreaking quote begins the booklet, "Too Big To Ignore: Youth Homelessness in California," a November 2009 report by the California Coalition For Youth (CYC) and the John Burton Foundation for Children without Homes, funded by The California Wellness Foundation.

This booklet was handed out at the December "Children's Advocacy Roundtable" meeting. These tragic facts were presented by Lisa Foster of the California Research Bureau. Over 200,000 youth in California are estimated as homeless. These young people ages 16-24 are primarily the victims of family conflict; some forced out by their families and some flee to escape abuse and or neglect. Many are ejected by their families when they reveal they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

To make matters worse, often law enforcement officers assume homeless youth are criminals and "ticket" them for sleeping on the streets, instead of offering supportive services. As a result of this "victimization," homeless youth do not turn to police for help. Rather they remain hidden "statistics," sleeping on the couches of different friends-"couch surfing," or sleeping under freeways and on the streets. I watched a very moving film about homeless youth. Many youth interviewed in the film reported leaving home due to molestation of them or their siblings, or having conflict when a "step-parent" moves into the home. One very articulate young man in his early 20's reported that he had a job working in a bank and remained sleeping on the streets so he could save enough money to pay for his own apartment, of course needing first and last month's rent plus a deposit. He had about \$900 put away in his bank account when he was given another "ticket" for sleeping on the street and law enforcement and the legal system garnished his wages to pay for accumulated tickets. Of course he lost the savings for his apartment. There are very few shelters for homeless youth and often they are not allowed to or are too fearful to go to adult shelters.

For more information: see "Capacity Building Project" [www.cahomelessyouth.org](http://www.cahomelessyouth.org).

The California Coalition for Youth and the John Burton Foundation are charged to educate policy makers about these shameful realities and to turn their report, agenda and recommendations into actions that can significantly reduce youth homelessness.

## PERSONAL MEASURES: IDEAS FOR CONSERVING ENERGY AND WATER

By LaVerne Ireland, Chair, Climate Change Committee

### **BE STINGY WITH:**

- “use-it-once-and-toss-it”: these items waste re-sources and fill up limited space in dumps
- aluminum foil: huge amounts of electricity to re-fine the ore
- anything plastic: it’s made of petroleum
- synthetic fabrics: mostly made from petroleum
- anything that has to travel a long distance
- over-packaging: often based on petroleum
- unnecessary driving and low mpg, air-polluting cars
- unnecessary A/C and heater use
- unnecessary home lighting
- unnecessary laundry clothes drying
- unnecessary water use (especially hot water): shorter showers, using a timer for outside water-ing, eliminating thirsty landscaping all save water and the energy used to move it around and for

water treatment before and after use

- redundant appliances and appliances that stay on all the time
- open fires
- your two-cycle engines: and don’t buy another
- bottled water

### **DO:**

- choose re-usables whenever possible
- consolidate errand driving
- study labels, especially at grocery stores (where did this product come from?)
- eat seasonally and locally as far as it’s feasible
- WRITE your state and national elected repre-sentatives and tell them that you want them to support strong legislation to curb global warm-ing.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill out this form, include a check or money order and mail to:

**League of Women Voters of Sacramento County**  
**1107 9th Street Suite 300**  
**Sacramento, CA 95814**

Individual Membership	\$65.00
Family Membership (two adults at same address)	\$100.00
Student Membership	\$15.00
Supported Membership (\$15 minimum)	_____

Assistance requested from Membership Support Fund; Please fill out amount enclosed

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is open to all U.S. citizens, 18 years of age or older. Non-citizens and youth under 18 may join as associ-ate members. Membership dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. Joining the LWVSC makes you a member of all levels of League (local, state, and national).

## FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE

December 20, 2009

By Lola Acosta

At this writing, the Senate health reform bill will be up for a vote on Monday December 21 at 1:00 AM. It would then need reconciliation with the House bill. A final vote is set for Dec. 24th. Called the President's top domestic priority; it is promised to significantly overhaul the country's health care system, extending health benefits to more than 30 million uninsured Americans. According to the December 20, 2009 New York Times, the bill would extend health benefits by expanding [Medicaid](#) and providing subsidies to help moderate-income people buy private insurance. It would require nearly all Americans to obtain insurance or pay financial penalties for failing to do so.

While Republicans charge some benefits would only take effect years after new taxes and fees kicked in, calling it "budget gimmickry," Democrats describe the legislation as historic.

House liberals are expected to resist some concessions made in the Senate, especially the proposed government-run [health insurance](#) plan, or [public option](#). Instead, the Senate bill would create at least two national insurance plans modeled after those offered to federal workers. The bill bars insurers from denying coverage based on pre-existing medical conditions. In order to secure the minimum 60 votes needed under Senate rules, 13 hours of negotiation were conducted with Nebraska Senator Nelson. Under the deal reached with Mr. Nelson, health insurance plans would not be required or forbidden to cover abortions, but states could prohibit the coverage of abortions by plans offered for sale through new government-regulated marketplaces.

Nationally, advocates of the single payer (government run health plan) including Physicians for a National Health Plan and Health Care for All, or the public option, including the League of Women Voters of the United States, remained steadfast in lobbying their congresspersons, arguing that the model pursued by the Senate is designed to nurture the private insurance industry and that everyone in our nation should have the health care that they need without having to face financial hardship, and without regard to their gender.

Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman, writing December 18<sup>th</sup> in the New York Times, said social programs have historically started modestly in order to win congressional approval, including Social Security, which few Americans realize is a government run program, but over time were negotiated to cover more Americans. With an estimated 37 million Americans without health care insurance, and mounting medical debt the single largest reason why families file for bankruptcy, Mr. Krugman's comments offer little immediate comfort.

Next month, we will provide an update on California's Senate Bill 810.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Beverly A. Norton

Edith Richmond

## PASSINGS

We note the November 18, 2009 passing of Beatrice Elizabeth Fabretti,  
a 50 year member of the League of Women Voters.

## JANUARY UNIT MEETINGS

January unit meetings will focus on the gap between the number of college graduates California needs to maintain a growing economy and where we are currently, facing the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation of workers.

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City	Monday, January 11 6:15 PM	Tom Swift 453-8707	5308 Shepard Avenue Sacramento, CA 95819
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, January 12 9:15 AM	Mary McCullough 967-7382	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael 95608
Greenhaven/ Land Park	Tuesday, January 12 9:30 AM	Mary Hopkins 422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento 95831
Elk Grove	Tuesday, January 12 1 PM	Pat Justice 391-9439	8622 Shasta Lily Drive Elk Grove 95624

**Eileen Heaser, unit coordinator, 916-456-2154 or [eheser@csus.edu](mailto:eheser@csus.edu)**



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OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

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***JANUARY 2010***

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## **ELECTRONIC SACRAMENTO VOTER**

At the November meeting, Board members endorsed the move to an electronic version of the Voter. Beginning with the February Voter, members with e-mail addresses will receive their Voters electronically as an attachment. Exploration of improved methods for creating this electronic document will begin, so the Voter may change its appearance over time. Those members with only postal addresses will continue to receive the print version of the Voter. Members who wish to continue receiving the print edition should notify the League office at 447-8693.