



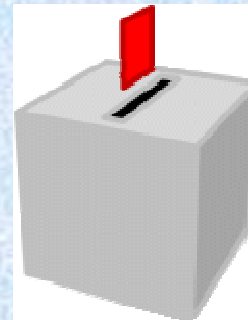
VOTER

December 2009 / January 2010

Volume 50, Number 3

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Be an informed voter

CALENDAR LWVSLOCO 2010

December 2009	No Events Scheduled	
January 5, 2010 Tuesday	BOARD MEETING PG&E Community Center	9 AM – 10:30 AM
January 14 Thursday	Lunch & Learn- PROGRAM PLANNING PG&E Conference Center	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
January 30 Saturday	Congresswoman Capps, HEALTH REFORM Time and Place TBD	
February 14 Sunday	NATIONAL LWV, 90TH BIRTHDAY Celebration TBD	
February 20 Saturday	CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENT Special Program Unitarian Church, Parker Street, SLO	10 AM – 12 PM
February 23, Tuesday	BOARD MEETING PG&E Community Center	9AM – 10:30 AM

Message from the President



Ann Garfinkel

The budget woes of California have been a focal point of many of my notes to you, and it seems the bad news just won't quit. Every sector of the economy is hurting, San Luis Obispo County being no exception, and one of the most visible casualties is about to become our LIBRARIES.

Branches in the County are facing employee layoffs and reduced hours at a time when usage has never been higher. Unemployed residents rely on the libraries for internet access to write resumes; families borrow books and DVDs at such a high rate it is hard to keep current selections on the shelves. Library staff members are doing a stellar job and we need to keep them on the job. Volunteers can, and do, offer valuable help to personnel, but are not replacements for the staff.

Please contact your County Supervisors and urge them to find the necessary dollars to keep our libraries open! League members have always been staunch supporters of our Public Library system, and your voices need to be heard today.

There are also several opportunities for LWV member involvement, so if you would like to pitch in and help make our League even stronger please get in touch with me and we'll find just the right spot for you.

Wishing you and yours a Happy Holiday Season and a pleasant transition into the coming New Year.

Yours in League,
Ann

Membership Memo Sharon Whitney

What are the benefits of membership in LWV? First, you are able to network with other of the "best and brightest" residents who value and want to contribute to what the LWV does better than any other organization—study a broad range of local policy issues in order to advocate effective governmental action and secondly, you help provide neutral voter services and forums during special and general elections featuring local candidates.

We have some long time league members whose dues are not paid. There is still time to renew before the new directory-handbook is created in January. Recruitment efforts for new members continue at national, state, and local levels even in these difficult economic times. In this era of increased hyperbolic and uncivil rhetoric, the LWV stands out as a voice of intelligent reason, and, if you agree with that, we need your participation now more than ever.

Individual membership rate is \$60/year; household membership rate is \$85/year. Other contributions are welcome. For more information, please contact me at sharon@sharonwhitney.com or call me at 805-543-8182.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon G. Whitney, Membership Director



Ring in the New Year with SLOLWV

Holiday Gathering Postponed;

January Party Planned

The Holiday Celebration scheduled for Dec. 5th at Jan Potter's lovely home has had to be postponed due to a variety of circumstances that prevent full participation of the Board. Jan has offered her home for a gathering closer to Spring, so stay tuned for further information.

However, all you party people don't despair, your Board is planning a Happy New Year Party, Jan. 14th from 11 – 1 (our regular Lunch and Learn program). So bring a sandwich and your good ideas to accompany the "goodies" provided by the Board, and participate in National and Local program planning for the year. Do plan on joining the party at the PG&E Community Center the 2nd Thursday in January,

Important New Contact Information

LWVSLO Phone number 805-782-4040

PG&E Community Center
6588 Ontario Road, Avila Beach
(Off Hwy 101 and San Luis Bay Drive)

L & L Grand Jury Discussion Recommended By All

Steven Martinez, foreperson of the SLO County Grand Jury, spoke to 20 LWV members at the October 29th Lunch & Learn discussion. In a wide ranging talk covering all aspects of the Grand Jury system, including the history of the Grand Jury in both the US and California, our speaker kept his audience engaged and full of questions. Although all states have provisions for Grand Juries, uniquely only two states, California and Nevada, are ordered to annually serve as watchdogs over county government. Since there are 58 counties, there are 58 California Grand Juries every year looking into different aspects of county gov't.

The SLO Grand Jury is chosen every year from volunteers, often retirees due to the time demands. After interviews with a Superior Court judge, the list is narrowed down to 30 "true and qualified" participants. Nineteen names plus 11 alternates, 3 of whom are active participants, are then drawn at random to form the grand jury. These individuals commit to one year of service from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. Mr. Martinez stated that the Grand Jury members generally work about 20 hr./week and meet ½ days on Wednesday and Thursday. They are given a month of training, a handbook and paid \$15/day plus mileage. A small home on Mill Street in San Luis Obispo serves as a meeting place and they are provided with a half time administrative assistant. The jurors do their own investigations and write their own committee reports. There are four committees: County Government, City Government, Law & Justice, and Special Projects and every juror is a member of two committees. Last year the SLO Grand Jury issued 19 reports.

According to Mr. Martinez, the SLO County Grand Jury is a surprisingly independent organization. No structure is imposed on the Jurors and when the foreperson reports to the state court system (a judge) 2 or 3 times a year, no specifics are discussed and only general advice is given. There are three methods for choosing topics for

investigations; signed citizen complaints, self generated topics from the grand jurors (It takes 12 votes to be accepted, eliminating personal agendas from the occasional juror with “an ax to grind”) and previous Grand Jury topics that were not completed. Only jails- city, county and California Men's Colony- are required yearly to be subjects for investigation.

The Grand Jury does have significant powers of investigation, most importantly, it has subpoena power. Also it can administer an admonishment, violation of which is a misdemeanor, and an oath, a felony if disregarded. A key to Grand Jury success is confidentiality. All jurors and participants are sworn to secrecy. Only after a report is issued can a juror talk about the subjects investigated. As a result of an investigation there are four avenues of action, the Grand Jury can vote to vacate (if a subject has become too political or becomes involved in active litigation, or has no merit), it can vote for an indictment, it can choose to make an accusation (similar to an indictment, but usually involves malfeasance and loss of office) or most often, it can issue a report.

Mr. Martinez reported that he decided to apply for the Grand Jury in 2008 (he is one of 5 two term members) because he wanted to know his new county better and that, in general, he enjoys being “nosey”. He feels Grand Jury service has been a highlight of his life in San Luis Obispo County and recommends that everyone who is interested apply this February through April and begin the interview process. Speaking forthrightly to his audience, he admitted that in addition to education about the Grand Jury process, the second reason for his presentation to our Lunch & Learn session was recruitment. Audience members who had been Grand Jurors in the past, confirmed his feelings of pride in contributing to the health of our county. Following the presentation, lunch around a large communal table continued the lively question and answer session. Several members voiced concerns that he was not eating his lunch, but he insisted that he would rather talk about the grand jury system to interested citizens than eat!

First Five L&L Focuses On Oral Health Program



*Kathy Phipps of the **Children's Oral Health Initiative** shares information with League L&L attendees on Nov.12. A part of **First Five SLO County**, Kathy is working to develop a coordinated oral health care system for children ages 0 - 5 in SLO County. Among the many relevant statistics shared was the fact that in SLO county 80% of the dental problems are in 20% of the children. Volunteers are working with local school districts, clinics, and county Dentists to improve oral health for young children.*

League Info: Bits and Pieces

Phone Tree: A special “Thank You” to League members Maureen Martin, Carrie Pardo, Adele Stern and Vera Wallen who responded to our plea for help last month and have volunteered to call all League members without an e-mail address so that they can be kept informed on upcoming events, program changes and action alerts.

Transportation Assistance: If you are a member who could use assistance getting to one of our events you may call one of our board members living nearby and they will be happy to provide transportation. If you would be willing to volunteer to take someone to an event, please contact Arlene Powers at aaupowers@charter.net or call the league office at 805-782-4040. We want to make every effort see that everyone who is interested is able to attend. Those board members to contact for rides are Vera Wallen, Cayucos, Pati Dale, Morro Bay, Arlene Powers, Los Osos, Ann Garfinkel, Los Osos, Sara Horne, Avila Beach, Eve Jeys, Nipomo and Sharon Whitney, San Luis Obispo.

Board Schedule: All future times for our board meetings have been changed to 9:00 -10:30 AM, the location remains the same; the PG&E Community Center, 6588 Ontario Rd, San Luis Obispo . Remember all League members are welcomed to attend the Board Meetings on the 4th Tuesday of the month as we prepare for the next month's business.

OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board of Trustees, SLO Co. Office of Education

Date of Observation: October 1, 2009

All members of the Board were present except Gaye Galvan. The meeting was called to order by President Floyd Moffatt at 5:30 PM. (Note: The Board is required to hold meetings involving adoption of instructional materials at times when working parents are able to attend.) After the Pledge of Allegiance, adoption of the Agenda and Consent Agenda, the floor was opened for Public Comments. There were none.

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent Dr. Julian Crocker provided information about the problem of potential transfer of special education classes from the county to the home districts. Districts which are considering a transfer must decide by October 15. Two Districts, Lucia Mar and San Luis Coastal, have opted not to make the transfer. Atascadero and Paso Robles have still been gathering information with the help of a consultant. Dr. Crocker has a copy of the completed report for Paso Robles. His response to the report is that it is not adequate, in that it is lacking in background information and reflects insufficient time spent with county staff to get accurate information about costs and the impact on handicapped children. He has sent a letter to both the Paso Robles and Atascadero Districts expressing his concerns. He indicated that small outlying districts, e.g., Shandon, San Miguel, etc. will have to be served by Palo Robles and Atascadero if those Districts proceed with the transfer, because it will not be feasible for the County to continue to serve the smaller districts..



STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Public Hearing

A notice of public hearing was posted ten days prior to this meeting as required when the Board votes on issues involving instructional materials.

A notice had also gone out to parents. However, there was no public input, and it did not appear that any parents were attending.

Action Item

The Board adopted a Resolution to “Resolve and Certify Sufficient Core Materials are Available for all Students Attending Community and Special Education Schools.” The required Resolution stated that each pupil in the district had sufficient textbooks or instructional materials in specified subjects consistent with curriculum standards adopted by the State Board. Staff had prepared an extensive inventory of materials for the SLOCOE Board to review. It was noted that because of the fiscal crisis there are fewer new materials.

BUSINESS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Board heard a report on the Annual Statement of 2008-09 Balance of Receipts and Expenditures. The County Office ended the fiscal year without a deficit. This report is sent to the State Superintendent of Instruction on or before October 15 each year. Similar reports are generated by the local districts and are reviewed and approved by the County Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Reported by Joanne Milburn

Water Resources Board

Date: October 7, 2009

A special meeting of the WRAC was held from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon, to discuss the draft of the Master Water Plan for SLO County. I did not attend. There will be a follow up meeting in December.

The regular meeting was called to order at 1:30 by our Chair. After reports on The Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan, Paso Robles groundwater, San Miguel Ranch draft EIR, a discussion of the perceived (by some) need for a Land to Sea advisory body to coordinate water conservation issues throughout the county, Syllas Cramer, water resource engineer with the county Department of Water and Power, gave a presentation on the Data Enhancement Plan. The plan identifies sources of information on water, such as rainfall gauges, groundwater gauges and stream flow gauges that the DPW can use to determine available water and also indicates areas where data is not being gathered and should be. It was suggested that data from independent consumers with rainfall gauges might be useful. It was also suggested than more or less permanent sites, such as schools, fire stations and golf courses, would be appropriate locations for gauges.

There were no reports from the Los Osos Wastewater Project subcommittee and the Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances subcommittee.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30.

Reported by Dawn Williams

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Budget:	Glenn Silloway	
Website:	Carey Marsh	
Nominating:	Colleen Ehrenberg	
LWVC Management Training Advisor:	Beverly King	



Relevant Websites

LWVSLOCO	www.lwvslo.org
LWVUS	www.lwv.org (Click on "members" and create your own password)
LWVC – members	www.lwvc.org/lwvonly
Guide to Government	www.guidetogov.org
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Senate	www.senate.ca.gov
Assembly	www.assembly.ca.gov
Easy Voter Guide	www.easylvoter.org
League Easy Web	www.lwvnet.org
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www.lwvslo.org

www.smartvoter.org

Dear Members,

Thank you to all who have sent in their renewal checks along with updated information. We are making every effort to reach all of our members quickly and efficiently. The shift to electronic communication continues at every level of League, so having your correct e-mail is crucial. Locally, everything coming from LWVUS is in digital format, and LWVC sends most materials the same way. We will make every effort to keep the information coming your way, but you are urged to learn how to access our website: www.lwvslo.org at your local Library if you do not have a computer in your home. Please remember that changes to your e-mail, phone number, or address should be sent to Sharon Whitney, LWVSLO, PO Box 4210, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403

Our next edition will include updated member information, so if you have not had a chance to send in your dues please do so at your earliest convenience. Your very hard working Board appreciates your help!

If you have any questions about when your dues are up for renewal please call me at 805 543-8182.

Sharon Whitney

Membership Director

**JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS... and make an INFORMED difference!
BECOME A LEAGUE MEMBER OR GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP!!**

Invite a Friend to JOIN UP!

Membership is open to all citizens of voting age. Associate membership is offered to students, non citizens and individuals wishing to receive the VOTER only.

Membership is for one year, July 1 to June 30

\$60 individual \$85 household membership (2 persons same address) \$25 associate membership

I wish to make an additional CONTRIBUTION in the amount of: \$ _____

I am unable to join at this time, but here is a CONTRIBUTION in the amount of: \$ _____

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