



Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY August/September 2010

Women's Equality Day Celebration

Join us as we celebrate Women's Equality Day on Sunday, August 29 at 2:30 pm at the Seven Oaks Country Club. Two outstanding speakers, Cathy Abernathy and Gene Tackett, will address our timely topic, *Ladies' Day in California Elections*.

Women's Equality Day marks the anniversary of the passage in 1920 of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote. So here we are 90 years later with a woman running for governor of the state and two women vying for the U.S Senate, hoping to join an incumbent U.S. woman senator. Locally, several women already hold offices, and others are running for the state senate and the assembly. As a commercial once said, "You've come a long way, baby."

Cathy Abernathy has operated a political, marketing and legislative consulting business for 10 years after serving as Chief of Staff to Congressman Bill Thomas, former Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. She is also a political commentator for the Bakersfield NBC television affiliate. Abernathy divides her time between the nation's capitol and her home base in Bakersfield.

Cathy Abernathy served for three years as the Staff Director of the House Administrative Committee. The Committee handles administration and oversight of House internal affairs and the Library of Congress, as well as federal election laws and contested elections.

Gene Tackett is the principal of Gene Tackett Consulting, specializing in government relations and media consulting. His company assists clients to maneuver through the government regulatory process. He served as a member of the Kern County Board of Supervisors for eight years and was a Democratic nominee for State Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives. Tackett serves as a campaign advisor for local elected officials and assists with the "Community Politics" course at CSUB.

Currently Tackett is a political analyst for the local NBC television affiliate. A former Peace Corps volunteer in North India, Tackett is involved in the local community and is a member of LWVKC.

Seven Oaks Country Club is located at 2000 Grand Lakes Avenue. The cost, including refreshments, for this event is \$12 payable at the door. Please call the League Line, 634-3773, for reservations no later than August 25.—Lynne Rosenstein

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President's Message

The League hears from the White House!

President Obama congratulated the League of Women Voters on 90 years of strengthening our nation by empowering citizens to participate in government. The League was founded the same year the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. Since that time, League has been the nonpartisan organization committed to representative government and protecting the individual liberties established in the constitution. Click or go to: www.lwv.org to read the letter.

The 2008 Presidential election reached a record number voter turnout when the first woman and African American man were running. The League wants to continue that spirit and start the next *90 years* by reaching out to our youth. Research shows that it is possible to create long term change by encouraging long civic participation from high school seniors who are

at a critical turning point of the lives. The National League implemented the High School Registration Project as a nationwide effort to register young people, especially minorities, to vote. The Kern League signed on!! We registered over 600 students in Kern County. A special “thank you” to Board members Michelle Turner, Pam Baugher, Tracey LaMonica and Lois Watson for all their work.

And the Democracy Award goes to....***Fuchsia Ward!*** Fuchsia was selected as this year’s recipient of the Making Democracy Work Award at the Annual Meeting in May. Many “at risk” students in Kern County contribute their success to Fuchsia for her tireless effort to motivate each student to stay focus on education. Fuchsia, understanding the importance and the power of education through her own personal experience, shares with students the need to get their education and stay in school. Fuchsia currently works for the Kern High School District, holds a Masters Degree in Education, and held several positions at the high school and community college level. A special thank you to our nominees for their community leadership: Elena Acosta, Colleen McGauley, Lupe Perez, and Mikey Hay.

You should be proud to be a member... The Board Retreat in June was a success. Your Kern County Board put in about six hours to discuss, plan and develop an action plan to ensure we are focusing on the issues and planning the events our members want! It started with pre-retreat meetings to allow focused time in each area. The Board heard the ideas at the retreat and provided feedback. Read more inside.

.—Diane Williams

LWV Voter Is Going GREEN

League members will have the choice of receiving the Voter delivered to their “in-box” by e-mail or to their mailbox by snail mail beginning with this issue. Members will receive the Voter by e-mail if they have an e-mail address unless they indicate otherwise.

If you wish to receive a paper copy of the Voter by regular mail or if you haven’t given us your e-mail address, please call Pam Baugher, 324-3668, OR e-mail her at scrubby@aol.com and leave a message to that effect.

September Meeting: City Of Bakersfield Pensions

A hot topic on the November 2 ballot is the question of whether or not to reduce pensions for future police officers and firefighters hired starting in 2011 by the City of Bakersfield. Currently, these public safety personnel can retire at age 50 with up to 3 percent of their last highest salary for each year they worked. If passed, the measure would reduce pensions for all new hires to 2 percent at age 50 based on averaged salaries three years before retirement.

City Finance Director Nelson Smith will be our speaker at the September 15 general meeting. He will discuss the upcoming ballot measure regarding public safety retirement plan issues and present an overview of the City's unfunded liabilities.

Nelson Smith has worked for the City of Bakersfield since 1990. A graduate of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and CSUB where he earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration, Smith oversees a staff of 30 people in the city departments of Treasury, Purchasing, Accounting and Property Management.

Councilman Zack Scrivner is the driving force behind this measure. He and Councilmembers David Couch and Ken Weir wrote the argument in support of the as yet unnamed measure. Composing the argument against the measure were Mark A. Martinez, Thomas S. Webster, Robert Otto and Mark Salvaggio.

Bring your questions about this issue to the September 15th meeting at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. The meeting begins with dinner at 5:45 pm. Make your reservations by calling the League Line at 634-3773 or e-mail Patti Jepsen at patriciajepsen@aol.com by noon Monday, September 13. Cost of the dinner is \$22, but members and guests are welcome to attend only the program which begins at approximately 6:45.—Lynne Rosenstein

Where Do Your Dues Go?

It is time to renew your membership with the League of Women Voters of Kern County! You strengthen our voice by being a member of our organization, and you become an informed voter by learning about the issues. You should receive your renewal packet in August, and it's due by October 1, 2010.

So, where do your dues go? The League of women voters is a three-tiered organization. Members join a local League whose dues support all three levels of League. The Kern League dues are \$75 per individual and \$25 for each additional household member. Here is how the dues are divided:

\$26.80 to LWVUS for national study, action, office and publications

\$21.00 to LWVC for state action, resources and training services for local leagues and administrative cost.

\$7.20 to LWVKC for local studies, voter services, action, administrative cost, and publications.

Start now. Learn about the candidates and propositions on the November election. See inside for more details. Tell a friend about the League and thank you for your support!

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Busy Summer and Fall Ahead for LWVKC Registering Voters

This summer and fall, the League of Women Voters of Kern County has several volunteer opportunities to help with Voter Registration in Kern County.

Roughly 1 in 3 registered voters participated in the June Primaries, meaning less than 1/3 of our residents are making the decisions for the county. Then there are those who aren't even registered. The League has its work cut out!

We plan on several Voter Registration events, and this is where we count on our membership to step up. We can connect with the community and raise awareness about LWVKC.

Please look over the list and call to sign up to staff a table. It's what League is all about!

We have an invitation to set up tables at several Farmer's Market's **through October** and covering any shifts would be a great help.

Three locations on Tuesdays:

4 to 7 p.m., Central Park

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cecil Park, Delano

3 to 6 p.m. Norris Road and Chester Avenue, Oildale

On Wednesdays:

3 to 6 p.m. Public Health Services Department, 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

We have others in the works, including: a large event at the KC Fairgrounds on September 12 (Viva Mexico), Smackdown Your Vote on August 17 at the Rabobank Arena., and KC Fair: 3 days (TBA). We're planning on a table at Valley Plaza and at grocery stores around town. If any of these dates sound intriguing, we can create a sign up sheet and work out the details.

2010 High School Voter Registration Project

The High School Voter Registration Project is a nationwide effort to encourage young people--especially young minorities--to register to vote. This groundbreaking project aims to register 27,000 high school students in 100 high schools, and 20 of those schools are in Kern County. It is also a first-of-its-kind research experiment to measure the effectiveness of various voter registration strategies in schools. Leagues are working in five states (California, Texas, Arizona, Florida and Virginia) to carry out the project in 2010.

Why now?

Research shows that it is possible to create long-term change by encouraging life-long civic participation from young people: 91 percent of registered voters under the age of 30 cast a ballot in 2008. However, Americans under the age of 30 remain severely underrepresented in the electorate, and the disparities in youth voting grow even wider when looking at African-Americans, Latinos, and those with no college experience. What's more, many youth registration drives target college campuses, missing the 43 percent of Americans with no college experience.

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From the economy to the future of health care and our energy security, our elected officials are making decisions now that will affect today's youth for decades to come. Young voters have a critical voice to lend. This project aims to empower young people to stand up and make the most of their right to vote. That's why we believe it is vital to reach America's future voters while they are still in high school. We're thrilled to work with educators to fulfill that mission in 2010 and beyond.

LWVKC members Pam Baugher, Tracey LaMonica, Michelle Turner, Rachael Turner and Lois Watson visited eight schools and turned in registration forms for over 600 high school seniors. In return, LWVKC received \$1,800.00 in grant money provided by LWVUS.

LWVKC was proud to be a part of this nation-wide project and will renew our efforts this fall at the high school level.

LWVUS Recognizes Local Leagues Efforts

High School Voter Registration Project: Leagues in Action

The League of Women Voters of Kern County, CA is visiting area high schools this spring with one message: register, vote, and be counted! By June 1st, the Kern County League will have held registration events at eight schools. Just this week, members helped more than 250 Ridgeview High School students complete registration applications!

Through its participation in LWVEF's 2010 High School Voter Registration Project, the Kern County League is at the front lines of a groundbreaking effort to engage youth and also measure the effectiveness of various registration strategies. Their experiences and insights will help inform Leagues' youth-related work for years to come.

In the photos below, Kern County League leader Michelle Turner (L) speaks to more than 500 Bakersfield High School students at an outdoor assembly (R).– from LWVUS publication.



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You Should Be Proud To Be A Member...

The Board Retreat in June was a success. Your Kern County Board put in about six hours to discuss, plan and develop an action plan to ensure we are focusing on the issues and planning the events our members want! It started with pre-retreat meetings to allow focused time in each area. The Board heard the ideas at the retreat and provided feedback.

The meeting began with our State League Consultant, Bev King, facilitating a refresher course on Board responsibilities, policies and procedures and the Board organization chart. After lunch, we jumped in and focused on the League Goals and the Action Plan. Here is a summary of what we discussed:

League Goals

Mission

The League of Women voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizen in the government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Theme

76 Years of Engaging the Community through Education and Advocacy

Goals

1. Develop Active Members

Our purpose is to educate members about important issues and to influence public policy through education and advocacy and engage members in the activities of the League.

2. Clarify the Image

Increase community awareness of the League by focusing on issues that are important at the local, state, and national levels.

3. Increase Income

Increase income through countywide membership growth, donations, and fundraisers

Action Plan

Fund Raising

Bev King facilitated this segment by asking the Board what we would do if the Kern League just received a check of \$100,000. Here are some of the ideas:

- Participate in mock elections at the school level
- Hire a high-power speaker
- Hire a webmaster to create our own website. The State League website template has limited options.
- Have a theater holiday party
- Conduct a rummage sale with items from League members.
- Have a silent auction with items donated by League members
- Partner with other organizations or solicit a sponsor for certain events.

Bev pointed out that many of these ideas were low to no cost and some could be fund raisers. The main focus should be to find ways to meet our goals, raise some money and have FUN.

Budget

- Manage expenses by staying within the budget adopted by our members at the May Annual meeting. Promote donations and sustaining contributions to the Education Fund. Remind members that PayPal is available for online donations.
- Board members were encouraged to solicit their favorite businesses to place ads in the newsletter. The ads are \$100 for a one year business card size ad which is circulated to over 90 members and recognized at every League meeting.

Membership Services

- Is the telephone tree effective? Researching the effectiveness of the telephone tree.
- Increase membership by 10% by May 2011.
- Develop outreach efforts by creating partnerships and through the use of media to increase government participation in our Hispanic community.
- The League is green! Poll members to determine if they would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail instead of by the U. S. mail.

Community Relations

- It starts with the voters! Voter registration will become a continuous effort each year and NOT just a few months during election year. We will register new citizens, partner with other organizations, farmers markets, malls, grocery stores, high schools, street and county fairs, everywhere!
- Promote our Pros and Cons and Candidate Forum services.
- Distribute Voter Guides to the 21 senior centers in Kern County, Greater Bakersfield, Hispanic and Black Chambers of Commerce, farmers markets, and other outlying communities.
- Work with local media and radio stations to communicate League events or announcements.
- Use Constant Contact to announce League meetings to members.

Program

- Welcome new members by inviting them to lunch at the Country Rose to learn about the League.
 - Personally invite members to attend a Koffee Klatch to participate in an informal meeting on a current or program meeting topic.
 - Create FUN events that our members would get excited about and want to participate.
 - Personally invite members to volunteer for upcoming events or have a small role on a committee.
 - Create an advisory board of past League Presidents, Bakersfield Californian editor
-

STAY INFORMED

www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org

www.ca.lwv.org

www.smartvoter.org

* www.easyvoter.org

* www.cavotes.org

www.lwv.org

- Find in-depth information on California ballot propositions on these sites.

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Thank You to Kern County League

Dear Members of KCLWV,

You have my heartfelt gratitude for sending me as delegate to “90 Years of Making Democracy Work: A History of Change, A Future of Hope.” LWVUS Convention, June 11–15, 2010, Atlanta Georgia. My trusty, fellow delegate, Michelle Turner, and I returned energized and in awe of the LWVUS.

Imagine delegates from over 800 Leagues working together on the major issues of our nation in a most professional and organized manner. The California Delegation was the largest in attendance with over 60 delegates under the very capable leadership of California League President Janis Hirohama who, at barely five feet tall, is bundled in energy, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Most impressive was a panel of past presidents sharing their experiences over the years with U.S. presidents and major congressional leaders. Large screens on both sides of the speakers’ platform provided actual pictures of past League presidents along side of major

U.S. leaders of the time. LWVUS President Mary Wilson conducted the plenary sessions, paving the way for the election of the new president, Mary MacNamara. Georgia Congressman John Lewis was a keynote speaker as well as Leslie Sanchez, journalist and author of the recently published book [You Have Come a Long Way Maybe!](#)

Discussions among delegates took place in the caucuses and workshops. I attended the sessions on the Role of the Federal Government in Education, Eater, and Food, Streamlining Local Leagues, Popular Vote and Redistricting. Michelle and I manned our table during the time for "Wares and Exhibits". We brought home a new banner and tablecloth for our use in "Making Democracy Work" on the local level.

Thank you League Members,
Dee Whitley, Government

•

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Calendar

August/September/October ---Voter Registration tables. See article p.

August 10—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room .

August 29—Sunday, 2:30 p.m. – Women’s Equality Day, Gene Tackett & Cathy Abernathy, speakers, \$12 admission and refreshments, Seven Oaks Country Club, 2000 Grand Lakes Ave. Reservations due by August 25.

September 14—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room

September 15—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. Bakersfield Finances & Retirement Ballot Measure, City Finance Director Nelson Smith, speaker. Dinner is \$22. Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. No cost for attendance at program only. Reservations due by noon Sept. 13.

October 8—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room USC-3

October (TBA) --- Pro/Con Forum on November ballot initiatives.

November 2—Statewide Election

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



Michelle & Pam registering voters at CSUB



LWVKC Annual Board Retreat



Michelle & Dee at LWVUS Convention, Atlanta Atlanta



Dee & Michelle at LWKWC Wares Table, Atlanta Atlanta