

Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY

January/February 2010

President's Message

I believe it's essential to become informed about the important issues that concern our community and the electorate. That's one of the reasons I joined the League of Women Voters of Kern County. I also wanted to insure that others had access to information that would help them become knowledgeable enough to cast their votes based on facts, not on emotions, commercial sound bites, or flyers.

My first experience with the League sold me. Lois Chaney who was League President at the time, invited me to a Pros and Cons forum at the Petroleum Club. Just walking into the meeting at the Petroleum Club, I felt overwhelmed. When I was growing up, politics were not discussed in my household. But my worries soon disappeared. Not only did the League make issues understandable, they also taught me how to research and trace the money supporting a proposition or candidate. Knowing this was a critical piece in my voting decisions. Before too long, I joined.

For 90 years, the League has built a reputation as a respected non-partisan grass roots organization committed to improving communities through education and advocacy. We maintain this grass roots reputation by reaching out to *you* every two years to find out what issues are on your mind.

Are you concerned...

- *that California was once the envy of the nation as the leader in education, and now is 48th in the country on educational spending?*
- *that the once world-class California University System now strangles for funds while pricing itself out of the means of many potential and current students?*
- *if our children will have a healthy financial future, or will they be left with state and national debt?*
- *about affordable and accessible healthcare?*
- *assuring that natural resources will be available our children*

We want to hear from you. Join us at the **Program Planning meeting on January 20** as we set the course for the League's resources and efforts for the next two years. You will be asked to tell us what local and national issues concern you. A survey is included in this Voter. Please mail it back ASAP. Do plan to attend the planning meeting on January 20 at 6 pm at the Merced Center, 2000 K Street. Dinner will be provided.

The League celebrates 90 years on Valentines Day! All members are invited to a brunch on February 6 to celebrate this special anniversary. Come hear about the history of change and the future of hope as we share the League's achievements over the last nine decades and how we plan to make the local League more visible in Kern County. More information follows. —Diane Williams

Calendar

January 12—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Rm USC-3.

January 20—Wednesday, 7 pm. **Annual Planning Meeting.** Your input is valued as we set the League's direction for the next two years. Merced Center, 2000 K St, ground floor meeting room. Dinner will be provided. Call the League Line for reservation.*

February 6—Saturday, 10 am to noon. **Membership Appreciation Brunch** and celebration of the League's 90th anniversary at the home of Terri and David Stanton, 5107 Outlook Lane. Call the League Line for reservation.*

February 10—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Rm USC-3

February 17—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. General dinner meeting with speaker Christine Frazier, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, discussing the consequences of the state budget cuts on Kern schools. Please call the League Line* for reservations no later than noon February 15. Cost of dinner is \$22. No cost for attendance at program only.

TBA—New Member Orientation at the Country Rose Tea Room.

Reminder: General meeting are usually 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.

Kern County transportation video featured in November

C*risis at the Crossroads*, a video produced by the Kern Transportation Foundation (KTF), will be the centerpiece of the League's November meeting. The video highlights the urgency of transportation issues confronting Kern County residents. The dinner meeting will be held November 18 at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue.

Ken Secor and Dale Mills, members of the KTF Board of Directors, will present the video and provide current information about transportation needs and projects. KTF works with state and local government agencies and private sector organizations to develop planning strategies and find funding solutions to meet Kern County's present and future needs. *Crisis at the Crossroads* was produced to emphasize the vital importance of these efforts.

Please make your dinner reservation by calling the League Line, 634-3773, by noon November 16. Cost of dinner is \$22. As always, there is no charge for those wishing to attend the program only.—editor I

LWVKC Annual Planning Meeting is January 20

YOUR LEAGUE—YOUR CHOICE

Decide what issues deserve our resources & efforts for the next two years.

Chart the course for the LWVKC.

Wednesday, January 20, 7 pm, Merced Center, 2000 K St, ground floor meeting room

Dinner will be provided. Please make a reservation by calling the League Line, 634-3773.

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

**Your annual dues are due now.
Please do your part and send your check
payable to LWVKC to
League of Women Voters of Kern County
PO Box 132, Bakersfield CA 93302
YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED.
THANK YOU!**

Kern Co. School Superintendent at February meeting

Kern County Superintendent of Schools Christine Frazier will be our guest speaker at the February 17 general dinner meeting. She will address the ramifications of the current budget cuts in education, and discuss expected adjustments in the next five years. Christine Frazier has had many titles including teacher, principal, and superintendent. She joined the Superintendent of Schools' office in 1996, serving as associate superintendent since 2005. Frazier was appointed superintendent last June following the retirement of Larry Reider.

Sharon Carver, chief business officer when Frazier was Kernville superintendent, described Superintendent Frazier as personable, intelligent, and a great public speaker. She stated that Superintendent Frazier has a lively sense of humor, and her focus has always been children. Carver was not surprised when Christine Frazier was selected Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

Because League members have professed great concern about the state of education in Kern County, it is important that we attend this presentation. The dinner meeting begins at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. Please call the League Line for reservations, 634-3773 by noon Monday, February 15.—Barbara Lovell

**You are invited to the
Membership Appreciation Brunch
and celebration of the League's 90th anniversary
Saturday, February 6 at 10 am
Terri & David Stanton's home, 5107 Outlook Lane.
RSVP to the League Line, 634-3773.**

**League members monitor elections throughout Kern
County**

During the month of November, the League of Women Voters of Kern County participated in the election process in several small elections throughout the county. Some League members assisted the local Service Employees International Union (SEIU) verify their election process and others helped the Kern City Home Owners Association (HOA) count ballots for their local election.

I was fortunate to help assist the HOA and the SEIU on two different nights and enjoyed watching the election process unfold. The simple act of casting a ballot for an increase in dues, bylaws or new member election is the most basic of our democratic society. I also enjoyed meeting SEIU member Thomas Gilbreath who took great pride in his duties and was quite meticulous. He made certain ballot boxes were sealed prior to voting and was dedicated to the SEIU members who came to vote. His attitude toward the voting process and the members was gratifying to watch. It reminded me of the democratic process in this country on a small level and how important it is to remain involved.

Our League members fanned out across Kern County to assist SEIU elections in Bakersfield, Delano and Lake Isabella. A special "thank you" to all the League members who helped in the election monitoring: Diane Williams, Dee Whitley, Majida Shehadeh, Annis Cassells, Terri Stanton, Lynne Rosenstein, Pamela Baugher, Lois Chaney, Patti Ashby, Janet Ford Shell, Margo Perry, and Michelle Turner. Volunteers also helped at Kern City Homeowners Association election.—Tracey La Monica

"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting." Franklin D. Roosevelt

Q & A about redistricting

Question: When did the concept of political districts and California State Census begin?

Answer: Beginning in the year 1800, a state population census was to take place every ten years. Districts for elected offices were drawn based on the population numbers collected in the state census. From the beginning, the process has been impacted by political interests.

Question: What was the impact of the lawsuit Baker versus Carr on the redistricting process?

Answer: The result eliminated territorial basis for legislative districts and mandated "one person, one vote" as the guiding principle. Political power shifted from rural to urban areas.

Question: When did things begin to change?

Answer: In 1971, for the first time, both houses of the California legislature were reapportioned based on population. Due to political deadlock, three retired judges appointed by the State Supreme Court drew the Congressional and legislative maps. The process resulted in increased African American representation.

Question: How did things continue to change?

Answer: In 1981, the legislature handled redistricting. In 1991, again due to political deadlock, new districts were drawn by a court appointed official. This resulted in increased Hispanic, Asian and female representation in the state.

Question: What happened in 2001?

Answer: In 2001, the legislature implemented redistricting through a bi-partisan agreement. The result: the "incumbent protection plan."

To be continued in the next issue of the Voter! Stay tuned for the Reformed Process!—Dee Whitley

Update on LWVKC water study

The Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region is enormous. It is bounded on the north by the San Joaquin River watershed, on the south by the Tehachapi Mountains, on the east by the Sierra Mountains, and on the west by the Temblor Range. The rivers in the region are the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, and Kern. Reservoirs include Pine Flat lake, Lake Kaweah, Success Lake, and Lake Isabella. In addition to natural sources of water, the region is also dependent upon the Central Valley Project (Kern/Friant Canal) and the State Project Water (California Aqueduct). It has no outlet to the sea; surface water runoff naturally drains into the Tulare, Buena Vista, and Kern Lake beds where it sinks.

Rainfall in the valley varies from 6 to 11 inches per year while mountain precipitation is 12 to 36 inches. This hydrologic region is agriculturally important in that it produces a major portion of the food consumed in the United States in addition to specialty crops which are shipped to other countries.

Hundreds of water districts make up the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region. Each area within this region has its own challenges. In the north, farmers use a balance of surface water from the Kings and Tule Rivers and expensive State Project Water. Ground water is problematic in that any land owner may drill as deep and pump as much water as he can afford without outside controls. There needs to be a consistent way of measuring the amount of ground water in the aquifer and the speed in which it is consumed and replenished. While much of the eastern part of the region has good quality ground water, much of the ground water from the western side is unusable due to high concentrations of salts and can only be used when mixed with surface water.

While studying the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region, the water study group saw a need for a more macro point of view. As each of the many areas of this region has its own unique advantages and problems, so do each of the ten different hydrologic regions within the state. A better use of our time would be to study and educate our local league and the public about the California Water plan which will appear on the ballot next November.—Lois Watson, Water Study chair and Ginny Dalles, Dorothy Meyer and Del Gardner

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

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