

Valley Voter

League of Women Voters
Livermore-Amador Valley

June 2006

President's Message

Hello again.

Perhaps I should say, "Surprise!" If you were not at the League's Annual Meeting, you may not be aware that, as a result of action taken there, I will continue to be your President for one more year, and Jim Kohnen will be your new Treasurer. Many thanks, Jim, for volunteering.

This fall you will want to participate in the local study of our position on "Water" under Mary Ann Hannon's capable leadership. And be sure to take advantage of the other opportunities the League offers at every level to learn more about the issues affecting our lives. Among these are the numerous state propositions we anticipate being on the November ballot.

The Board will also be looking into holding its meetings in public locations every other month. Currently our monthly meetings are held in the homes of Board members. Wherever we meet, members are always welcome to attend. However, it was suggested at the Annual Meeting that members might be more inclined to attend if the Board meetings were held in public places. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

Have a wonderful summer,
Barbara Hempill



California Leadership Council Report

Julice Winter and I were please to represent you at the California Leadership Council in Sacramento May 6 and 7. We returned full of enthusiasm and ideas for the coming year.

At breakfast on Sunday morning we were able to pick table topics and exchange ideas with state leaders and League members from all over California. From the dozen topics possible, Julice chose the table topic "National Parks" and I chose "Health Care." The diversity of table topics reflected the many interests of League members.

The highlight of the Council for me was the keynote speech on Saturday night given by LWVUS President Kay Maxwell. The following are some excerpts from her remarks.

"The League believes that American democracy is at risk and that now is the time to act. Years of Band-Aid solutions and neglect have allowed many of our government systems to grow weak. Our Democracy Agenda offers viable solutions to help overcome those weaknesses, and educate communities and citizens nationwide on how to improve things. This effort is about protecting our electoral processes through election reform efforts and reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act; advancing our representative government through nonpartisan redistricting; preserving our constitutional rights by safeguarding civil liberties; and protecting against governmental corruption through campaign finance and lobbying reform. . .

"Years of inattention and complacency have given us an election management system that is not up to the task. According to the Election Center, there are 7,000 different jurisdictions in this country responsible for overseeing 200,000 polling sites. The job of managing this system falls to 18,000 paid elections staff and 1.4 million poll workers, most of whom receive just two to three hours of training—if that. Poll workers and election officials in this country do a remarkable and vitally important job. But the system is failing them just as it is failing the voters."

President Maxwell said the League has identified four steps that need to be taken to improve the administration of our elections. In summary they are:

1. Professionalization of election administration.
2. Put the "service" back in "voter service."
3. Launch a wide-ranging research and development effort to apply 21st Century systems and technologies to the election process.
4. A substantial and sustained investment on the part of the federal government. Get real about the resources required to run elections in a way that is consistent with this nation's democratic ideals.

She went on to say:

"Another issue that goes to the heart of the democratic system is the controversy over partisan redistricting, or gerrymandering. This controversy is as old as the Republic. You probably know that the term gerrymander itself comes from Governor Gerry of Massachusetts, who created an election district so long and misshapen that it looked like a salamander—hence the name Gerry-mander. Today, with the advent of modern computers and growing partisanship, it is possible to create legislative districts where the results of an election will be known before any votes are cast or counted. This is just what is happening across the nation. And it threatens our democracy. . .

"The League espouses four basic redistricting principles for protecting the integrity of the electoral process. First, we support the bedrock constitutional guarantee of "one person, one vote." Second, the redistricting process should promote full political participation by minority voters. Third, the redistricting process should be transparent and open to public participation. Finally, we oppose partisan gerrymandering because it subverts our democratic system. Representative democracy depends on the voters freely choosing their representatives rather than politicians choosing their voters."

President Maxwell went on to talk about Civil Liberties and Campaign Finance and Lobbying Reform. In conclusion she said, "The League's Democracy Agenda – election (*Continued*)

reform and reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act; nonpartisan redistricting; safeguarding civil liberties; and campaign finance and lobbying reform – is also a citizen’s agenda. Neither the League nor any other organization can accomplish change without the involvement of citizens; and that means each and every one of you.”

Barbara Hempill

Annual Meeting Report

In addition to electing a new board, approving the annual budget, and adding a paragraph to our “Education” position, members who attended the Annual Meeting enjoyed hearing Jack Colbourn, Director of Outreach and Incentives for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, which covers nine counties accounting for 5,340 square miles.



Since 1955 the population of the district has more than doubled, the number of cars has tripled, and air pollution has quadrupled. Sixty-five percent of the air pollution is attributable to cars, trucks and other vehicles. Mid afternoon is the time of day when pollution is highest.

Jack Colbourn is responsible for promoting the “Spare the Air” Program this summer. You can help by reducing your driving (try to accomplish all your tasks in the course of one trip); postponing use of gasoline powered lawn and garden equipment; not using consumer products that pollute; not using gasoline powered boats; and conserving energy. Look for the “Spare the Air” promotions on television.

Barbara Hempill

Farmers’ Market Booth Off to a Good Start in Livermore

At the summer Livermore Farmers’ Market, we’ve had exceptional success in getting people to update their voter registration. Name changes, address updates, changes in political party registration – and yes, a few first-time registrations too – all have been serviced at our table.



The League has had a table at the corner of 3rd and J Streets for several years, and it's a fine location to catch the attention of those who come out to stock up on fruits and vegetables -- and, more important to us, update their voting status!

The first Thursday, May 18th, 11 VRF's were utilized by voters. And the following Thursday activity increased to an additional 25!

We plan to be there each Thursday during the summer. You are welcome at our table. Come on by!

Fred Lovell

League Scholarship Winner

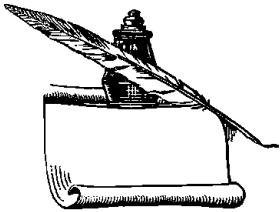
The annual Livermore-Amador Valley League \$500 scholarship was won this year by Brittany Humrich. Although Brittany works 40 hours a week for a mortgage company in Danville, she carries 11 to 14 units per semester at Las Positas and has a 3-point grade average. Brittany will be finishing her classes at Las Positas in the fall while concurrently enrolled at CSU East Bay. She will major in Criminal Justice and minor in Psychology. She plans to do post-graduate work at the Alameda County Police Academy.



Brittany was also awarded the AAUW "Tribute for Excellence award. She is active in her church and the community and has applied to be a Community Service Specialist for the Livermore Police Department.

Time to Re-Up!

It's time to renew your membership in the Livermore-Amador Valley League of Women Voters and invite a friend to join you!



Last month you received a letter inviting you to renew your membership. Please respond right away, if you have not already renewed. Lost the letter? There's a membership form on the back of this VOTER.

And when you renew, we hope you will join the 17 members who have already included a special donation to LWV-LAV or LWVEF, the League's Education Fund.

Pat Mann, Membership VP

Proposition 81 and 82 Presentation

Thanks to the team from the Livermore-Amador Valley League who put together the terrific presentation on Propositions 81 and 82, later shown on local cable channel 26. They were professional, well informed, and respectful of others.

Team members included Mary Beth Acuff, Eileen Barr, Larry Moyer, Pat Mann, Julice Winter, Ann Rathjen, and Vivian Thorson together with our ever-faithful representative from channel 26, Jim Burt.

Thanks to all of you. You were the BEST. The evening was great!

Vivian Thorson

Who's Who in the League

2006-07 Board

- President, Barbara Hempill
(925) 846-9739 barbehem@comcast.net
- Administrative Vice-President, Chuck Hazen
(925) 447-7823
- Membership Vice-President, Pat Mann
(925) 447-3672 grandmamann@yahoo.com
- Treasurer, Jim Kohnen
(925) 828-3623 jim483@aol.com
- Secretary, Audrey Lovell
(925) 447-2573 lovells@aol.com
- Voter Service, Vivian Thorson
(925) 846-5001 sheldonviv@juno.com
- Director, Mary Beth Acuff
(925) 829-0832 mbacuff@comcast.net
- Director, Dolores Bengtson
(925) 846-4865 grannydolo@aol.com
- Director, Becky Dennis
(925) 426-1525 becky_dennis838@hotmail.com
- Director, Kim Halket
(925) 829-4719 halketkim@dublin.K12.ca.us
- Director, Chuck Hartwig
(925) 443-5470 charles.hartwig@gmail.com
- Voter Editor, Walt Morgan
(925) 846-3199 RobinWalt@sbcglobal.net
- Director, Larry Moyer
(925) 846-0474 larrymoyer@aol.com
- Director, Elteen Stone
(925) 447-3195 elteen@compuserve.com
- Director, Julice Winter
(925) 373-6623 julicew@sbcglobal.net

Distributing Registration Affidavits

The League continues to distribute Voter Registration forms throughout the valley. Pat Mann, Elteen Stone, Jim and Mary Ann Hannon, and Carolyn Ramsey took them to Post Offices, schools, Las Positas College, and the libraries in Livermore. Fred Lovell enjoys setting up a table at the Livermore Farmer's Market every Thursday in the summer to personally speak to people about registering to vote.

Vivian Thorson, Elva Cooper, and Larry Moyer do the same in Pleasanton, serving the library, fire stations, and the Post Office. Since the Pleasanton Farmers' Market is year-round, the League has a table there periodically, in rotation with other public service groups.

Eileen Barr takes care of Dublin as well as bringing us more forms from Oakland when we need them. She also is our liaison with the other Alameda County Leagues. The County of Alameda pays our leagues to distribute the forms so that people can conveniently register to vote. This contributes nearly \$1000 to our league each year; but, more importantly, we are helping people vote!

Mary Ann Hannon

Water Position Update Study

Water, water – it's not everywhere in California. How does it get to our valley? Will we have enough in dry years? Why does it taste different from one side of the valley to the other? What if we had to choose between quantity or quality? Who is Zone 7? What water issues should we look at to update our position? Water rates? Flood control? Sludge disposal (not from sewage treatment, but from treating the water to make it potable)? Water supply for agriculture? Recycled water?

If you would enjoy helping scope our study or researching any of these topics, or if you just want to explore possibilities, please contact Mary Ann Hannon, who has agreed to chair the study. The first meeting of the nascent committee will be June 21, at Mary Ann's home (309 Pearl Drive, Livermore) at 9:30 am. Margaret Tracy, former Zone 7 board member; Jim Kohnen, present Zone 7 Board member; and Julice Winter have signed up so far. Please join us!

Mary Ann Hannon (443-5588)
hannonma@comcast.net

June Board Briefs

- Due to financial concerns, we voted to cancel having a Just Vote banner for Pleasanton prior to the November election.
- Look for a letter, on behalf of the League, from Mary Beth Acuff appearing in local newspapers.
- The LWVC is supporting both SCA 3 (redistricting) and SB 840 (Single-Payer Health Care bill).
- The Sept. Board meeting will be at the Livermore Library, in response to a request for the meetings to alternate between private homes and public places.

Ann Rathjen
Secretary

Calendar

Friday, June 23, "Transformation of the Bay Area Waterfront – Water-Linked Transit Oriented Development," 9-3, World Trade Center, Ferry Building, San Francisco. For information contact www.watertransit.org/TODC Conference.

Wednesday, June 21, Water Study Scoping Meeting, 309 Pearl Dr., Liv., 9:30 am.

Saturday, July 1, Board Retreat, 9-1. United Christian Church, 1886 College (at M), Livermore. Bring a Brown Bag lunch.



League of Women Voters
Livermore-Amador Valley
P.O. Box 702
Livermore, CA 94551-0702
(925) 443-VOTE

<http://www.geocities.com.lwvlav/newsletterindex.html>

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

The League is open to all U.S. citizens, men and women, age 18 or older. Annual dues are \$55 for one person, \$80 for two people in one household. By becoming a member of the Livermore-Amador Valley League, one also becomes a member of the Bay Area, California, and National Leagues.

Please mail this form with your check, payable to the League of Women Voters of Livermore-Amador Valley, to LWV-LAV, P.O. Box 702, Livermore, CA 94551.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____