



The Voter

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County

July/August 2012

Enjoy your summer ...



... but mark your ...



... because you've got to ...



... for this coming ...



SUMMER



ISSUE

The Prez Sez

Summer can be a good time to step back from the immediate demands of life and to reflect on deeper issues. For instance, is the League nonpartisan? “Nonpartisan” is defined in Merriam-Webster’s On-line Dictionary as an adjective meaning “free from party affiliation, bias or designation.”

At the start of each League meeting, I remind the audience of two points:

1. The League is a nonpartisan political organization which works to educate and inform the public to improve government, and
2. The League also studies issues, takes positions based on those studies, and advocates for those positions. The League, as a grass roots organization, has positions only on issues which it has studied and on which members have reached consensus.

Some people, especially those who aren’t League members, have difficulty grasping the dual aspects of the League, i.e., education and advocacy. In fact, several years ago an illustrious speaker at one of our meetings congratulated us on not taking positions, and we had to gently explain to her that we are nonpartisan, but we do take positions on some issues after we’ve studied them.

At our June meeting titled “Women’s Health Care: Is there an issue?”, we addressed issues related to the League’s position on health care. Someone in the audience asked, “If this is a nonpartisan organization and you purport to present this as a nonpartisan issue, why did you not have a speaker from Living Well?” (a local organization encouraging women to give up their unwanted babies for adoption as an alternative to abortion).

At the time I responded briefly, so as not to consume the little time left for our speakers to address other questions. Now I’d like to elaborate a bit more.

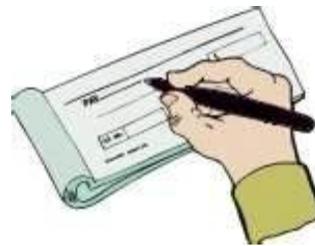
The League has survived and flourished for many decades as a widely respected political organization exactly because it is nonpartisan. Our June program was based on the League’s position on health care and examined various issues associated with women’s health care, all basically related to the issue of women’s access to health

care services. The program was not intended to be a debate on the relative merits of one health care service alternative over another. The League does not support one alternative over another, for example, abortion over adoption, or take the position that only one alternative should be legally accessible.

Health care decisions should be made between a woman and her physician without government interference limiting the choices available. The fundamental right to privacy should not be a partisan issue, nor does it need to be debated.

Karen Schwartz, President

Membership Renewal Time !



Hello, Members -

Your League of Women Voters membership renewal letter will be sent to you in early July. On the card that will be enclosed with the renewal letter, please update your address, phone number and email address for our new 2012-2013 Membership Directory.

Please send your check made payable to LWVWNC and the information card in the envelope provided no later than September 1, 2012. There will be no increase in the dues this year.

Thank you,
 Marcy Elliott
 Cleo Gibson
 Membership co-Chairs

A LOOK BACK
Our June 2012 Program
Women's Health Care: Is there an issue?

At our June 9 meeting we addressed some of the health care issues associated with the League's position on health care. The LWVUS studied health care for two years, and in 1993 announced its position supporting access to a basic level of quality care at an affordable cost for all U.S. residents and strong cost-control mechanisms to ensure the efficient and economical delivery of care.

At our meeting, our excellent speakers' panel addressed women's health care from many angles.

Dr. Christine Newsom provided an excellent summary of "best practices" for women of all ages, giving us detailed guidelines on exercise, diet, etc., for leading a healthy lifestyle. She also reviewed diagnostic tests and examinations that are essential to monitoring and preserving our health. In addressing the issue of access, Dr. Newsom reminded us that Medicare operates very efficiently with an overhead of only 3%, while treating the category of patients with the most serious health problems. Compare that to the private health care insurance industry where overhead consumes roughly 25 to 35% of revenues and patients are "cherry-picked" so that those with serious problems often lose their coverage or can't get coverage to begin with. That hefty overhead includes administrative costs, advertising, lobbying and very generous bonuses for their CEO's. To maintain the status quo, they pour a great deal of money into misleading the public.

Eileen Schnitger of Women's Health Specialists of Sacramento gave us an account of the history of women's health care. Struggling with unwanted pregnancies is probably as old as the human race, and history informs us that humans have practiced various forms of birth control for at least 4000 years!

But, perhaps, you thought this was ancient history, especially since the sexual revolution of the 1960's? This June we mark the 47th anniversary of the 1965 landmark Supreme Court decision, *Griswold v. Connecticut* authorizing the use of contraception under the right to privacy between patients and physicians. But change takes time. We learned that access to contraception in some rural communities in California excluded unmarried women as recently as 1975, when women began organizing their own health care clinics. Today the issue continues to resonate, and women asking for the inclusion of contraception in their health coverage are still deemed "sluts."

Elaine Sierra of Citizens for Choice presented a comprehensive picture of local, regional and national concerns such as unwanted teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. She also reviewed the variety of alternatives and services available through the Clinic!, Grass Valley.

I'm told that when the League and AAUW initially co-sponsored the Citizens for Choice Clinic in Grass Valley, they met with more than 30 landlords before finding one who would rent space to them. Fortunately, we've come a long way since then. Or have we?

Karen Schwartz, President

VOTER SERVICE REPORT

Voter Service has had a well-deserved two month respite. Pros & Cons for the upcoming November 6, 2012 Presidential Election will now take center stage. The League is planning both a September and October meeting featuring the numerous initiative and referenda ballot measures. These unbiased and duly researched presentations are always well attended by both members and the community at large.

Any member interested in participating in the Voter Service Committee, please contact Ruth Schwartz, Chairperson. This is an excellent opportunity for new members to become instantly involved with League nonpartisan research and with presentations to our monthly meeting audience, as well as to other organizations requesting our services.

At the time of this issue, the following Statewide Ballot Measures have been approved for the November 6, 2012 Presidential Election:

- Prohibits Political Contributions by Payroll Deduction. Prohibitions on Contributions to Candidates. Initiative Statute. Qualified 12/06/11.
- Changes Law to Allow Auto Insurance Companies to Set Prices Based on a Driver's History of Insurance Coverage. Initiative Statute. Qualified 1/18/12.
- Redistricting State Senate Districts. Referendum. Qualified 8/26/11.
- Death Penalty Repeal. Initiative Statute. Qualified 4/23/12.
- Three Strikes Law. Sentencing for Repeat Felony Offenders. Initiative Statute. Qualified 10/20/11.
- Human Trafficking. Penalties. Sex Offender Registration. Initiative Statute. Qualified 12/23/11.
- Tax Treatment for Multistate Businesses. Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Funding. Initiative Statute. Qualified 1/12/12.
- Genetically Engineered Foods. Mandatory Labeling. Initiative Statute. Qualified 6/11/11.
- Tax for Education and Early Childhood Programs. Initiative Statute. Qualified 6/20/12.
- Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment. Qualified 3/16/12.

Ballot Measures pending signature verification:

- State Budget, State/Local Governments. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.
- Approval of Health Care Insurance Rate Changes. Initiative statute.

Thirty-five (35) ballot measures are currently being circulated for voter signatures

Ruth Schwartz, Voter Service Chair

**Be Careful What
You wish For...
You Just Might
Get It!!!**



LEAGUE'S POSITION ON PRIVATIZATION

The League now has a position on Privatization! The LWVUS Board approved this new position, which is based on responses received from 227 Leagues across the country that participated in the Privatization Study.

POSITION -

The LWVUS believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or function to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the *common good* (italics are the authors) must be insured.

While some government services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities, Privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. For instance, it is not appropriate when the services provided by the government are necessary to preserve the *common good*, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. Services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, public health, education, transportation, environmental protection and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and through analysis of the implications of privatizing.

The position includes a list of those things to be considered when making the decision to transfer a public service to the private sector.

Polly Bacich, Action/Legislation Chair

What's In A Name?

Suffragette, suffragist, suffrage worker - What's the right name?



A London newspaper first used the term suffragette. British women in the suffrage movement adopted the term for themselves, though earlier the term they used was "suffragist." In America, the activists working for women's voting preferred the term "suffragist" or "suffrage worker." "Suffragette" was considered a disparaging term in America, much as "women's lib" (short for "women's liberation") was considered a disparaging and belittling term in the 1960s and 1970s. "Suffragette" in America also carried more of a radical or militant connotation that many American women suffrage activists did not want to be associated with, at least until Alice Paul and Harriot Stanton Blatch (Elizabeth Cady Stanton's daughter) began to bring some of the British militancy to the American struggle.

From About.com Women's History-Jone Johnson Lewis

LWVC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
May 19-20, 2012

I represented our League at the LWV of California Leadership Council in Sacramento on May 19-20, 2012. The meeting was chaired by our state president, Jennifer Waggoner, and she did a wonderful job.

The main item of business was the Budget for 2012-2013 of \$802K which was unanimously approved. This budget requires no increase in PMP (per member payment) to California although the LWVUS PMP is proposed to increase by \$1.00.

In addition to publishing *Smart Voter* and *Easy Voter*, LWVC again plans to publish the *Guide to California Government*.

Kim Klein was the speaker at the luncheon on Saturday. Her subject was, "Talking Taxes," and her message was that less money is available for charities and other worthy entities than in the past, so we need to talk about raising taxes. She was both informative and entertaining.

The LWVC 2013 Convention will be in late April or May in San Jose.

Thanks for allowing me to be your delegate this year.

Anne DeWitt

LWVWNC ANNUAL MEETING—May 12, 2012
Highlights

The meeting was called to order by President Karen Schwartz at 10:35 a.m. A sufficient number of members were present to establish a quorum.

- The Review and re-Adoption of LWVWNC local positions was given by Mary Dreifuss;
- Distribution of "Introduction to the Study Process" given to all members present;
- Voter Service Chairperson Ruth Schwartz explained the two top candidate voting system in the June election; she also spoke about the three forums held at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, and distributed copies of LWV "Easy Voter Guide" for the June 5 election;
- Action/Legislation Chair Polly Bacich remarked that the "Disclosure Act" is the major issue for the National League this year.
- Liane Dozier will no longer be the chair of the Observer Corps due to ill health;
- The next general membership meeting will be June 9, and the topic will be "Women's Health Matters." This was to have been the April meeting which was cancelled;
- Membership Chair Cleo Gibson reported that the current membership is 64 regular members and seven household members, and that we have six new members since the first of this year;
- A special presentation was given to Cleo Gibson honoring her fifty years as a League member;
- An election for the new Board of Directors was held and all nominees were unanimously approved;
- Member direction was given to the new Board and included 11 items to be studied or to be considered as topics for monthly meetings;
- The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Madelyn Helling, Secretary

Demystifying the League—a Primer for New Members (Part 2)

Voter Service - Action on League Principles

The League has two action arms. The first, **Action on Principles** or **Voter Service**, is the 501(c)(3) tax status under which you can contribute to the League's tax-deductible Education Fund.

So, what exactly is Voter Service? Take dedicated, tireless volunteers committed to educating the public about the voting process and its importance to our democracy and you have described Voter Service. Thanks to our League's Voter Service efforts, many people will be voting for the first time in November. The Voter Service Chair coordinates the details of many events: candidates' forums, Pros & Cons presentations, voter registration efforts, and an impressive number of members contribute their time and resources.

In addition to the above, all of these services are rendered in the fairest, most unbiased manner possible. You will never see a League volunteer discouraging a citizen from registering to vote regardless of how that volunteer might personally feel. Registrants often treat us to their political views. We smile, check the registration form, and keep our opinions to ourselves.

Oftentimes listeners at a Pros & Cons presentation ask the moderator what position the League has taken on a ballot measure. We refer them to the LWVC website or to the printed information that has been supplied to all local Leagues by the State League and is available at each Pros & Cons venue. We measure the success of these presentations by the number of citizens who leave with complete information on which they can confidently make their decisions. They receive exactly the same information that is found in the Pros & Cons distributed both online and in print by the State League.

League Advocacy - Action on Issues

The second, but equally important League arm, is **Advocacy**.

The League takes positions on and then actively speaks for issues we have studied and on which we have reached consensus. The issues fall into four categories: natural resources, social policy, government, and international relations. We work for legislative action that will benefit our country and all its people.

Local Leagues usually concentrate on issues that affect them immediately, but every League position is the result of a great deal of close study over a long period of time. A position is adopted at the state level only following consensus, that is, general agreement among all members of the local Leagues belonging to the state League. League positions come into play when ballot measures promote or conflict with them. That is why the League supports or opposes certain ballot measures. This action is entirely separate from the nonpartisan Voter Service Pros & Cons presentations.

Almost every new member asks: "What if I don't agree with a League position?" The answer is simple. Before anything else, the League cares about active and informed citizen participation.

How you vote is your own business. The League wouldn't have it any other way.



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Members



- Polly Bacich
- Simone Becker
- Anne DeWitt
- Mary Dreifuss
- Marcy Elliott
- Marian Gallaher
- Cleo Gibson
- Custis Haynes
- Madelyn Helling
- Nancy Hill
- Lita Holleman
- Jan and Larry Kaufman
- Sue Nepstead
- Sue Norrell and Steven Murphy
- Sharon O'Hara
- Gail Parle
- Arlene Robertson
- Dottie Schmidt
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- Pat Werner
- Helen Williamson
- Jackie Wilson
- Marilyn Wilson
- Mary Zotalis



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(530) 265-4596

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New Moon Café

203 York Street, Nevada City

(530) 265-6399

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Armstrong & Associates

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Natural Foods Community Market

290 Sierra College Drive, Grass Valley

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Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily - www.briarpatch.coop

The Wooden Spoon

A Toy Store for Cooks

2066 Nevada City Highway, Grass Valley

(530) 272-8980

www.woodenspooncalif.com

Mill Street Clothing

Lisa Swarthout

117 Mill Street, Grass Valley

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Flour Garden Bakery

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340 C Elm Avenue, Auburn

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