



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF PLACER COUNTY

Mission Statement

“To encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.”

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President’s Message

I am very pleased with the success of the monthly meetings we implemented this year. We have had some very interesting and informative speakers, and the venue is terrific. Crush 29 Restaurant is a beautiful setting, with delicious food, and they have been very accommodating to us. I hope all of you that have attended have enjoyed it. For more information regarding our monthly meetings, see the article in this newsletter and visit our website: www.lwvplacercounty.org.

In addition to our monthly meetings, we have had some very successful public forums. Our forum on November 21 featured experts on our water and sewer issues:

- Jim Durfee, Placer County Facility Services
Jill Pahl, Placer County Environmental Services
Gray Allen, Chairman, Placer County Water Agency

The presentations were very informative, and the forum was very well received. We appreciate the time and effort these presenters gave for this forum.

Our forum on January 16 featured Michele Huntoon, Associate Vice President of School Services of California, a consulting firm which provides services to school districts and other education agencies. Michele provided insights into how our education system is currently funded, as well as a historical perspective of how we got



Kathy Souza President

here. She also shared her analysis of the governor’s new budget proposal and how it affects education funding. See the article in this newsletter for more details regarding Michele’s presentation.

We are currently planning our next public forum for March 20. The topic will be state and local finances. We are collaborating with the League of Women Voters of Sacramento County on what should prove to be a very informative meeting with some very interesting guest speakers. Please save this date on your calendar and watch for more details to come soon.

This should be another exciting election year, beginning with the primary election on June 8. We will present information regarding the June ballot measures at our monthly meeting on May 5. Prior to that, we will have our own “election” on April 7, when we vote on the League’s priorities at the state and local levels. Please be sure to mark your calendars for these important meetings, held at Crush 29 Restaurant in Roseville.

Visit our website to learn about our league. It contains information about our League, a calendar of events, contact information, and links to other League websites. We update it regularly.

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Membership Luncheon Meetings

We started these monthly meetings in October 2009 to provide an ongoing forum for topical presentations and as an opportunity to get to know our fellow members. So far, they have been very successful because of your on-going interest. We have discussed health care, redistricting process Placer County Foundation and the Brown Act. Crush 29 restaurant has provided a wonderful venue for these events with a private room, great service and good food.

Please come and join us the first Wednesday of each month at Crush 29 restaurant in Roseville, California.

Opportunity Beckons!

Calling all members of the League of Women Voters of Placer County - now is the time for you to engage in your local league process of determining the leadership of LWVPC for the next two years. In January 2010 the LWVPC nominating committee will convene to provide a slate of nominees for officers and directors (LWVPC board) for approval at the annual members meeting in the spring and we need your input to determine who will be the best candidates to serve on the board.

Serving as a member of the LWVPC provides members an opportunity to be part of the decision making process, learn more about the many functions the league is engaged in, and develop new friendships.

Member Orientations To Begin in February

The board of directors will be holding three member orientations for the full membership starting in late February. The goal is to introduce you to the board and learn about each director's responsibilities, give you an opportunity to volunteer for committees and become involved in activities slated for 2010.

The first orientation will be targeted to members who live in Lincoln and will be held at board member Linda Theodore's house in Lincoln on February 25th from 2:00 – 3:30pm. The second and third orientations will be held for Roseville members at the end of March and the third for Auburn members in

The lunch is from 11:30am to 1pm and costs \$15, which includes an entree, drink, tax and tip.

Our next luncheon will be on February 3. It is our program planning meeting, during which time we will discuss potential issues for the League to study. This is a great opportunity to provide your input into what our organization should focus on in the coming year.

Candace Massey
First Vice President

If you are someone who can “assume leadership and delegate responsibility, inspire others to follow, have a sense of perspective as well as a sense of humor and are imaginative, creative and flexible”- you are a great candidate to serve as a board member.

We would encourage all members to assess their interest in serving on the board or nominating a fellow league member and contact Betty Green-Heffern at green-heffern@comcast.net with their suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Betty Green-Heffern
Nominating Committee Member

early April. If you find you cannot attend one in your area, you are welcome to participate in any of the three. The membership committee will be contacting you again to advise you of the details. This is an opportunity to learn about your League with a glass of wine and hors d'oeuvres while meeting other members who live nearby. If you have any questions, please contact Bernadette O'Keefe, Membership Chair bgog@sbcglobal.net or 916 543-6056.

Bernadette O'Keefe
Membership Chair

Education Funding Forum

On January 16, we hosted a public forum on education funding. Michelel Huntoon, CPA from School Services of California (SSC) presented information on the California budget and finances and how they relate to K-14 schools in our state.

SSC is a privately held company that provides business, financial and management consulting as well as advocacy (lobbying) for educational agencies. The Education Code is lengthy and complex and since the decisions on education are made by legislators, it requires a strong political will to get what is needed for education. Term limits have made it even harder for legislators to fully understand the impact and intricacies of legislation and so SSC has provided needed help to our educational agencies.

There are about 993 school districts, 10,000 schools and 6.2 million students in public schools in California. Since 1980, 70-80 districts have been combined, so the number of districts has declined in the last 30 years. Prior to 1970, schools were mostly financed by property taxes. Since then, Propositions 13, 4, 98; the Serrano vs. Priest decision; and the economic condition of the last couple years has added significant complexity and drastically reduced funding to the education budget.

The Serrano vs. Priest case lasted 10 years (71-81). Since funding was based on property taxes, there were sometimes big differences in funding for districts with low property value compared to districts with high property value. The state supreme court ruled schools were in violation of the "Equal Protection" clause of the state constitution. Subsequently, funding for high-wealth districts was held steady while funding for low-wealth districts was slowly moved up to equalize the situation.

Prop 13 (1978) held property values static so the impact on taxes was not immediate - but was felt over a longer period of time. The following year, Prop 4 restricted the growth of government spending to no more than the increase in revenues. These two "taxpayer revolts" caused a turnaround of schools being funded primarily

by the state instead of primarily by local property taxes. There are still some "basic aid" districts, which means they are still fully supported by property taxes, but that's only about 10% of the districts in the state. Tahoe/Truckee is a "basic aid" district; Granite Bay is not. Since state finances have been a fiasco recently, the schools have not benefited from this change. As if that isn't bad enough already, the state has a nasty habit of not paying everyone what they owe. So the schools are owed over \$1 billion that the state "guaranteed" to pay, but in fact did not.

So now school funding is provided 60% by state, 29% local, 10% federal, and 1% lottery. Michele's opinion is that the financial situation in California will be worse next year (2010/2011). She doesn't see a return to the 2007 level health of economy until 2013. This is based on all the temporary things included in the current budget - along with things like assuming we'll receive \$6.9 billion from the federal government, which the Legislative Analyst's Office says is unlikely.

California spends less than 25 other states in the nation on education. We pay our teachers more than any other state, and our student-to-teacher ratio is fourth in the nation. Prior to 1989, we spent more than the national average on education, and since then we've spent progressively less than the national average. The accounting structure changed significantly in the 1990's, so eventually we should be able to tie school performance to school budgets - which will make it clearer how money effects education results.

There are "Race to the Top" funds available from the federal government (\$300 - \$700 million) that requires a teacher's salary to be tied to student performance. The legislature has approved the application for this funding. Twenty percent of districts have opted out of this funding.

This was an exceptional presentation by a very knowledgeable presenter. We were fortunate to hear it.

Randi Swisley

Second Vice President

Learn About Becoming More Green in California

Are you interested in expanding your knowledge and skills about how California is becoming more GREEN? From water conservation and climate change to electric cars and energy efficiency – sustainability has moved from concept to implementation. The 2010 Green California Summit, the largest green government conference and exposition, is taking place at the Sacramento Convention Center March 15-17, 2010. March 15 is a pre-Summit day with in-depth full-day workshops and other special events. March 16 & 17 are the Summit and Expo dates.

The Green California Summit is the place to learn directly from the policy makers, government agencies, engineers and product suppliers what the future holds for sustainability efforts in California. Educational sessions will cover topics ranging from California's

new green building codes, to plans for a “smart grid,” to the proliferation of green business incubators throughout the state.

The Summit, now in its fourth year, will feature over 200 exhibitors and will include the fourth annual Green California Leadership Awards, an event that acknowledges projects exemplifying the best of green California.

Group discounts and early bird registration discounts are available. For information, pricing and to register go to: <http://www.green-technology.org/gcsummit/pricing.htm>.

Betty Green-Heffern

Member

Board Members

Board of Directors for 2009-2010:

Kathy Souza.....	President
Candace Massey.....	First Vice President
Randi Swisley.....	Second Vice President
Margie Spalding.....	Treasurer
Norma Brink.....	Secretary
Karen Flemming.....	Finance Director
Bernadette O’Keefe Glazer.....	Membership Director
Judy Marston.....	Voter Service Director
Linda Theodore.....	Director

Calendar

Join us for our monthly membership meetings at Crush 29”

Date	Time	Location	Description
Wednesday, February 3, 2010	11:30-1PM	Crush 29 1480 Eureka Rd Roseville, CA 95661	Issues Studies - General Members Meeting. If you can't make it to any other meeting - please either come or give us your feedback on this one! This is one of the biggest advantages of your membership to the league. You get a say in what issues the league chooses to study and emphasize in the coming year. Please let us know your ideas so they can be properly represented!
Wednesday, March 3, 2010	11:30-1PM	Crush 29 1480 Eureka Rd Roseville, CA 95661	Know Your Community - General Members Meeting. Ever wonder which special districts and government representatives you fund and vote for in your community? That information is hard to find - learn what we've collected so far and tell us how you'd like to receive that information.
Saturday, March 20, 2010	10am-noon	tbd	State & Local Finances - Public Forum. Please let us know if you have anything you'd like to hear more about on this topic. We're still planning the details.
Wednesday, April 7, 2010	11:30-1PM	Crush 29 1480 Eureka Rd Roseville, CA 95661	General Members Meeting. Currently we are taking feedback from members - THAT'S YOU - for this meeting.
Wednesday, May 5, 2010	11:30-1PM	Crush 29 1480 Eureka Rd Roseville, CA 95661	June Ballot Measures Review - General Members Meeting. We will review the June Ballot Measures in detail and answer any questions you may have on them.
Saturday, May 22, 2010	9am-noon	tbd	Annual Meeting.