



The Placer County Voter

The League of Women Voters of Placer County

Vol. 2, Issue 4

January, 2009

Note the Dates:

Unless otherwise noted, LWV meetings are held on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m., Sierra College Library, Rm.133, 5000 Rocklin Rd., Rocklin, CA

Saturday, January 24, 2009, Regional Planning and Transportation. Our special guest speakers will be Tom Cosgrove, Lincoln City Council member and Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County Supervisor.

Saturday, February 7, 2009, LWVC Program planning.

Saturday, March 21, 2009, Local Program Planning/Consensus on National Popular Vote.

Saturday, April 25th, 2009, Health Care.

A Message from President Kathy Souza

Happy New Year!

This time of year, it's always nice to look back over the previous year to take stock of your accomplishments. We have a lot of accomplishments to be proud of since our official kickoff meeting last January.



We are now up to 64 members in our new League. That is quite an accomplishment for a fledgling organization. It goes to prove that the time was right for forming a League in this area. We hope to be able to retain our members, recruit new ones and find ways for everyone to become involved in the organization.

We are very fortunate to have formed our new League in such an exciting, busy election year. We took advantage of the unusual opportunity of three elections this year to increase our visibility by moderating candidate forums and presenting ballot measure information to the community. Thanks to our wonderful polling precinct volunteers who donated their precious time during each election, we were able to build up our treasury.

We've increased our visibility and our communications ability with our website and newsletter. Our website has been an excellent source of voter information and a tool for membership recruitment. Our bimonthly newsletters are a great method of keeping our membership informed and engaged.

We have had some great meetings with some excellent speakers. I hope everyone who attended them enjoyed them and learned as much from them as I did. Some of the speakers were so good, we plan to invite them back for a repeat performance at future meetings.

It has been my great pleasure to watch our organization grow and to see many wonderful volunteers enthusiastically carry out the League of Women Voters' mission. I couldn't be more proud of our many accomplishments in 2008. Let's continue this great momentum into the coming year.

League of Women Voters of Placer County (LWV) Board of Directors 2008—2009.

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LWV Mission Statement: "To encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy."

2009 Calendar of Events—Kathy Souza

At the beginning of our fiscal year (July), the board of directors created an outline of meetings and events for the 2008-2009 year. This has been published on our website and in our newsletters.

We have had to reschedule some of our meetings this year to accommodate the schedules of some of our speakers and to align ourselves with the projects and programs of our state and national League organizations.

Please note the dates in the following revised calendar of events for the remainder of the year:

January 24 - Regional Planning and Transportation - Our special guest speakers will be Tom Cosgrove, Lincoln City Council member and Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County Supervisor.

February 7 – LWVC Program Planning – Help us provide input to our state League for priorities for the next biennium.

March 21 – Local Program Planning/Consensus on National Popular Vote Study – Join us in identifying priorities for our local League for the coming year. Also participate in a discussion and consensus process for the national study to consider the feasibility of implementing the national popular voting method for electing the President via state compacts.

April 25 – Health Care – Come learn more about the League's position on health care and listen to special guest speakers on this important subject. The public is welcome to attend.

All of the above meetings will be held from 10am to noon at the Sierra College Library, Room 133 (downstairs). Parking permits and campus maps will be emailed to members and made available on our website (www.lwvplacercounty.org).

We will be rescheduling our Annual Meeting, as our planned date coincides with the LWVC convention. We will announce our new meeting date soon.

February Meeting, LWVC Program Planning—Kathy Souza

Every two years, local League members are invited to set the agenda for the League of Women Voters of California for the next biennium, keeping the work of the League a truly grassroots function. Each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of the issues where the League will focus its time, talent and money.

Our membership meeting on **February 7** will be focused on two aspects of program planning. The first will be a review of our current state positions to see whether changes are needed. The second will be the selection of our League's recommendations for priorities in the coming biennium. The recommended priorities could be for a new study or update, community education on important issues, and/or advocacy based on existing LWVC or LWVUS positions.

Input from all local California Leagues will be considered by the LWVC board of directors, who will use then present a formal recommendation at the state convention in May. I hope everyone has an opportunity to participate in this important aspect of planning our state League's priorities.

March 21 Meeting, Local Program Planning and Nation Study on National Popular Vote — Kathy Souza

At our membership meeting on March 21, we will conduct our local program planning session. During this session, we will discuss potential studies or issues for emphasis within our local League for the coming year. Please think about what you would like to see as our League's priorities for the coming year and participate in this important discussion.

During our March 21 meeting, we will also discuss the LWVUS study, which is whether it is feasible to implement the national popular vote method via state compacts versus changing the U.S. Constitution. This issue has been gaining momentum over the years. While the League does have a position to abolish the electoral college in order to allow direct election of the President by popular vote, it does not address the implementation of this concept via state compacts. We will discuss the issue and come to consensus as a League by answering questions that all Leagues will be addressing.

This newsletter contains an article entitled "Selection of the President. It is a brief summary of this issue and the League's position. There is also a link on our website to additional materials on the LWVUS website, including pros and cons of the state compact method of implementing national popular vote. Please review this information and be prepared for discussion at our March 21 meeting.

The membership meeting on **March 21** will be held from **10am to noon at room 133 at the bottom floor of the Sierra College Library**. We will email copies of the parking permit and campus map prior to the event. This information will also be available to download from our website's Calendar of Events. Only LWVPC members may vote on this study.

Justice Kathleen Butz Presentation to LWV of Placer County—Betty Green-Heffern

On November 15th, 2008 at Sierra College, the Honorable Kathleen Butz, Associate Justice, Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, spoke to the League of Women Voters of Placer County. Justice Butz, who obtained her J.D. at UC Davis, was elevated to associate justice of the California State Court of Appeal for the Third Appellate District, in 2003.

Justice Butz spoke about the legal structure in California and outlined the form and function of the appellate court. Some of the many interesting facts she presented included:

- There are currently 6 appellate courts in California and 105 justices.

- There are 7 justices on the California Supreme Court.

- Three judges hear every appeals case and 2 of the 3 judges must agree on each judgment.

- Appellate judges review cases to identify errors that took place during a trial that may have caused a different outcome in the trial ("prejudicial errors").

- Only 10% of criminal cases actually get reversed; 15-20% of civil cases.

- Reversal of criminal cases usually results in retrial or resentencing.

- 55% of trial cases that are appealed are criminal, 25% are civil, 20% are juvenile.

- The governor appoints appellate judges, with a term of 12 years.

Justice Butz also entertained questions from the audience and was lauded by all in attendance, for her wonderful, educational presentation.

Renew your League of Women Voters Membership in 2009!— Betty Green-Heffern

The first set of renewal letters were sent out in December of 2008 for members who joined the League of Women Voters of Placer County when we were formed as the new Placer County League in late 2007. Going forward, your membership renewal date will be the month you joined the League of Women Voters of Placer County. For example, if you joined the League of Women Voters of Placer County in June of 2008, your renewal membership month will be June of 2009.

You will receive your membership renewal letter at least one month prior to your renewal date, and we will enclose a return envelope for your use in sending us your membership dues. Our dues will remain at the same level this year of \$60 per member and \$90 for a household membership (maximum two members at same address) thru June of 2009.

Your time, talent and treasury as a League member in 2008 helped provide for the following services performed for our members and the public:

Special Guest Speaker Presentations:

M. Kathleen Butz, Associate Justice, Court of Appeal, Jim McCauley, PlacerCounty Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters, Robert Weygandt, Placer County Supervisor, District 2, Betty Green-Heffern, Immigration Study Committee Member

Cont.-Renew your League of Women Voters Membership in 2009!— Betty Green-Heffern

Moderated and facilitated: Ballot Measure Presentations, Supervisor Candidate Forum, City Council Candidate Forums, School District Candidate Forums

Voter Services: Voter Registration Tables throughout the county, Staffed Polling places for all of the 2008 elections

Training: New Member Orientation, Speaker Training on ballot measures

We look forward to your continued membership in the League of Women Voters of Placer County.

Selection of the President—Kathy Souza**The League's History**

A League study of the presidential electoral process culminated in its 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as an essential element of representative government. In 2002 the League expanded and updated its position. The new position takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

At the 2008 Convention, the delegates voted to adopt a new study, "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President."

The League's Position

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

The Electoral College - A Review

The Electoral College is a process established by the founding fathers as a compromise between election of the President by Congress and election by popular vote. In short, the people of the United States [vote for electors](#) who then vote for the President and Vice President.

Each state is entitled to a number of presidential electors equal to its total representation in the House and Senate. The District of Columbia is awarded a number of electors equal to that of the least populous state.

The founding fathers designed this constitutional plan to promote several principles they considered important. One goal was to ensure that smaller states had a role in the election of the President. Secondly, the emphasis on the power of the state as contrasted to the power of the individual voter fostered the principles of federalism which are the core of the governmental process. Finally, the use of electors rather than popular vote assuaged concerns that the electorate was not competent or knowledgeable enough to be entrusted with the direct election of important government officials, such as the President and Vice President.

On Election Day, the voters cast their ballots for electors, even though the names of the candidates for President and Vice President are often the names shown on the ballot. Each state's electors meet forty days after

Election Day, and the formal balloting for president takes place at those meetings.

Many different proposals to alter the presidential election process by amending the Constitution, including direct nation-wide election by the people, have been offered over the years. None have been passed by Congress and sent to the States for ratification. Under the most common method for amending the Constitution, an amendment must be proposed by a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress and ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The Movement against the Electoral College

The most compelling argument against the Electoral College is that it prevents the direct election of the President by popular vote and is, therefore, contrary to modern principles of representative government. Studies show that more than 70 percent of American citizens favor the election of the President by popular vote.

Beyond this basic theoretical objection is the very practical objection that the Electoral College system enables candidates who have not received the most votes cast by American voters to become President.

We have seen such an outcome four times in our history:

- The first time was the 1824 election which was won by John Q. Adams even though he received fewer electoral votes and fewer popular votes than Andrew Jackson.
- In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes beat Samuel J. Tilden by one electoral vote, becoming President despite trailing in the popular vote by a count of 4,288,546 to 4,034,311.
- In 1888, Benjamin Harrison beat Grover Cleveland with an electoral vote of 233 to 168, despite Cleveland's popular vote margin of 5,534,488 to 5,443,892.
- Most recently, in the 2000 presidential election, George W. Bush received fewer popular votes than Albert Gore, Jr., but received a majority of electoral votes.

Against this background comes the National Popular Vote Compact Proposal (NPV).

The National Popular Vote Compact Proposal

The National Popular Vote Compact proposal offers a method of achieving the result of election of the President by popular vote without amending the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College. Instead, this method uses the mechanism of the Electoral College to ensure that the candidate who receives the most popular votes is elected President of the United States.

Under the proposed legislation to enact the National Popular Vote Compact, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538)

Current Status of the National Popular Vote Compact

Since passage of the National Popular Vote Compact is accomplished on a state-by-state basis, its status is fluid. As of September 1, 2008, the legislation necessary to activate the compact has been signed into law in four states: Maryland, New Jersey, Hawaii and Illinois, for a total of 50 of the 270 electoral votes required to activate the NPV Compact. NPV Compact bills have been introduced in 15 other states, where some have passed committee and others have passed one house.

LWV Newsletter Editor needed for 2009—*Kathy Twietmeyer*

The LWV is in need of a Newsletter Editor, starting the end of February. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Souza for more information.



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Regional Planning and Transportation, Tom Cosgrove, Lincoln City Council Member, guest speaker—

Lincoln City Council member and past chair of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Tom Cosgrove, will discuss regional transportation and land use planning. Over the past several years, the Sacramento region has become a national leader in truly integrating land use, housing, transportation and air quality planning, and involving thousands of residents in the effort in unprecedented ways. In 2004, the SACOG Board of Directors adopted a Blueprint smart growth vision for the next half-century of growth in our region, and last March they adopted the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2035 (MTP2035) that focuses \$42 billion of transportation investments over 28 years to complement that growth pattern.

Tom will also address SB 375, the new law, which requires new development to take into account green house gases that result from the project. California is under a mandate, AB 32, to reduce green house gases.

Development in Placer County, Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County Supervisor, guest speaker—

Jennifer Montgomery is our new Supervisor for District 5 in Placer County. This district ranges from North Auburn to Lake Tahoe. She says that this “nontraditional picture is for a nontraditional Supervisor”. Her background includes being a small business owner, Bank of America, Sierra Business Council and others. Her husband is a firefighter paramedic. Jennifer will address the future development in Placer County and her vision.



SATURDAY, JANUARY 24
10:00 – 12:00 P.M.
SIERRA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LRC-133)
5000 ROCKLIN ROAD
ROCKLIN, CA 95677



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF PLACER COUNTY**

JOIN THE LEAGUE

- Yes, I want to join the League of Women Voters of Placer County.
- Individual Membership \$60.00 Household Membership \$90.00
- I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$_____.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone (day/eve): _____

Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

My interests include:

- Program/Action
- Voter Service
- Fundraising for League projects
- Study Committees
- Special Projects

The League will help you...

- Be more informed about decisions you need to make that shape your community and your future
- Work on issues that directly affect you, your family and your community
- Become a problem solver
- Vote smart by being a smart voter through understanding the issues and how they affect your life

Print this page, fill it out, and mail it with your check to:

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Because we lobby on public policy issues, membership dues and contributions to the League of Women Voters are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution.