

# ***Voter***

*The League of Women Voters  
Of Fremont, Newark and  
Union City*



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FREMONT, NEWARK AND UNION CITY IN CO-  
SPONSORSHIP WITH THE CITY OF FREMONT PRESENTS:

## **SHINE A LIGHT ON GOVERNMENT: The Brown Act Forum**

**April 24, 2006 at  
Fremont City Hall  
5:00 PM - refreshments  
5:30—7:00 PM—Program**

**Do your representatives need to make decisions in public?**

**This?**



**No way!**

**Find out what the agencies serving the public need to do in  
answering your requests for agendas, minutes, etc.**

**Find out what "Open Government" means.**

**All appointed and elected officials in Newark, Union City and Fre-  
mont are strongly encouraged to attend.**

**The meeting is open to the public.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We recently sent a letter to the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area asking them to study the governance of the Hetch Hetchy System. The problems with it are many and directly affect the water users in the Bay Area and the entire state. Silicon Valley companies that rely on the purity of the Hetch Hetchy water have an impact on the economy of the state making this an issue that is important on the State level.

The goal of the study would be to understand the Hetch Hetchy governance to see if it is possible to give the 1.7 million Hetch Hetchy water users that don't live in San Francisco some say in the governance of the Hetch Hetchy. There is a \$5 billion water system improvement plan now in the EIR process. Will we get the seismic improvements first or last? Will our water bills double, triple or quadruple? Those 1.7 million people are now represented by BAWSCA (Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency) which can only recommend items to the SFPUC.

We will also continue studying the Hetch Hetchy system here in our League. If you would like to be part of the study or learn more about Hetch Hetchy governance, please contact me.

The Bay Area League chose not to do a full-blown study. They decided to make the "Hetch Hetchy Water System's WSIP (Water Supply Improvement Program) an Issue for Emphasis during the coming two years. We applaud the Bay Area League and we will also continue studying the Hetch Hetchy system here in our League. If you would like to be part of the study or learn more about Hetch Hetchy governance, please contact me.

—Miriam Keller

## BOARD BRIEFS

At its March meeting the Board

- ▶ discussed overseeing Homeowner Association elections,
- ▶ chose 5 projects that we will do for the LWVC "Meeting the Challenge",
- ▶ heard which elections will be on the June ballot, and
- ▶ approved questions for our section on Smart Voter.

## ACTION COMMITTEE

Action Committee is working out the details for a Brown Act training set for April 24th. We will be cosponsoring it with the City of Fremont. Members of the League will be trained to take an active part in the training and the facilitating of the event.

We assisted Susan Gearhart, Environmental Director, to submit a proposal to the LWVBA asking that they study the governance of the Hetch Hetchy System. We continue to inform ourselves on water issues.

We testified at the Fremont City Council requesting a change in Measure T to prevent development about the toe of the hill because unqualified personnel decided on the slope of the sites.

The Board authorized Action Committee to explore the implementation of two bills, AB537 and AB606 which are about safe schools, discrimination and harassment. We will be studying the bills with the intent of working with our school districts to make sure they are being implemented.

We continue to produce our monthly Voting Matters programs on Comcast and to respond to issues brought to us by our observers.

We meet the fourth Wednesday of the month, and we would welcome new members. Call Marilyn Singer at 657-1969 if you would like to observe us and then join our committee.

—Marilyn Singer

**A CONVERSATION WITH ALBERTO TORRICO**

Every year the State League designates a local League to take the lead in asking questions of State Legislators. The state provides four questions. This year's questions were about the problem of the gap between expenditures and revenues, health care concerns, redistricting, and the goals of the legislator.

On January 20th, Ellen Culver, Ursel Bloxson and Muriel Nolan interviewed Assemblymember Torrico. Assembly District 10 includes Fremont, Union City, Newark, Milpitas, and parts of San Jose, Castro Valley, Hayward and Pleasanton.

Assemblymember Torrico's comments centered on concerns about state budgetary constraints, both the process and the need for fiscal responsibility. He believes in "pay as you go" funding for current and future services. He wants to minimize the state's use of bonds to finance projects, because excessive use of bonds can impose a burden of debt on our children.

Assemblyman Torrico stated that the overwhelming majority of the state's spending is statutorily required by previous laws, and only a small portion can be adjusted by the Legislature and the Governor each year. He said that the public needs to understand these figures.

Another interesting comment he made was about home ownership. The ability to own one's own home is not only an important personal value, but also it encourages a stronger investment in one's community.

Assemblymember Torrico expressed the view that the vitality of the state and its citizens depends on educational opportunity, accessibility to health care and support for an improved infrastructure for transportation as well as upgrading the Delta Levees.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

We were delighted to have Ivy Wu as a guest at our last meeting where we discussed the California Exit Exam, Proposition 82, Pre-School for All, equity in course offerings in FUSD, and budget concerns.

Three members of the Education Committee, Miriam Keller, Ken Ballard and Vesta Wilson attended the EdSource Forum on March 17. It was held at the Fremont Marriott. Top State leaders and local superintendents discussed the latest developments and directions in accountability, and key researchers reported on newly commissioned funding adequacy and efficiency studies.

Speakers and panelists included;

Ron Bennet, president and CEO of School Services of California

Chris Cross, chairman of Croft and Joftus, LLC

Glee Johnson, member, California State Board of Education

Mike Kirst, professor of education and business administration, Stanford University

Kelvin Lee, superintendent, Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District

Susanna Loeb, associate professor of education, Stanford University

Ted Mitchell, Chair, Governors Advisory Committee on Education Excellence

Joe Nunez, California Teachers Association Associate Executive Director and State Board of Education member

Jack O'Connell, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Mary Perry, deputy director, EdSource

Jon Sonstelie, Professor of Economics, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

Dale Vigil, superintendent, Hayward Unified School District

You can see videos of these speakers at [www.Edsource.org](http://www.Edsource.org). —Vesta Wilson



### **Weekender's Fashion Fundraiser Drop By Saturday or Sunday, April 8 and 9**

*Cancun, Magenta, White, Black, Night Blue, Willow, Aquamarine, Mandarin, and Bali prints. The new spring/summer colors are here, with something to complement everyone's wardrobe and body style. Lots of styles and fabrics to choose from - knits, a new dress, fun skirts, shrugs, and a wide assortment of choices to mix and match into your own combinations! These clothes are comfortable, fashionable, easy care, flattering and also perfect for traveling.*

*Official Open House hours are **Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and Sunday 12:00-3:00**, but any sales to LWV members and friends that occur in the week prior also count toward the fundraiser. So, don't hesitate to call and schedule an alternate appointment. Any weekday after 3:00 p.m. can work.*

*2754 Olive Ave., Fremont (near Washington Blvd. intersection) Alternate appts. 656-0459*

—Holly Walter

**BROADCASTS AND REBROADCASTS OF TELEVISED GOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS**

Meeting	Days	Time	Channel	Rebroadcast	Time	Channel
<b>Fremont City Council</b>	1st, 2nd, & 3rd Tues.	7:00 PM	27	Wednesdays	10:00 AM	27
Fremont City Council Scheduled Study Sessions	3rd Tues.	4:00 PM	27			
Fremont Planning Commission	2nd & 4th Thurs.	7:PM	27	Following Fridays	10:00 AM	27
Fremont Unified SD	2nd & 4th Wed.	6:30 PM	27	Following Fridays	10:00 AM	27
<b>Ohlone</b>	2nd and 4th Wed.	7:15 PM	28	Following Thurs. Following Fridays	7:00 PM 10:00 AM	28 28
<b>Alameda County Board of Education</b>	2nd & 4th Wed.	6:00 PM	27	Saturday following Board Meeting	12 Midnight	27
<b>Washington Hospital</b>	4th Mon.	10:00 AM	27	See Note		
<b>Newark City Council</b>	2nd & 4th Thurs.	7:30 PM	26	Tape in Newark Library		
Newark Planning Commission	Tues. before Council Meeting	7:30 PM	26			
Newark Unified SD	1st & 3rd Tues.	7:30 PM	26			
<b>Ohlone</b>	2nd & 4th Wed.	7:15 PM	28	1st Mon.	6:00 PM	15
<b>Alameda County Board of Education</b>	2nd & 4th Tues.	6:00 PM	26	Saturday after Board Meeting	12 Midnight	26
<b>Washington Hospital</b>	4th Wed.	3:00 PM	26	See Note		
<b>Union City City Council</b>	2nd & 4th Tues.	7:00 PM	15	Following Fridays	6:00 PM	15
Union City Planning Commission	1st & 3rd Thurs.	6:00 PM	15	2nd & 4th Thurs.	6:00 PM	15
New Haven Unified SD	2nd & 3rd Thurs.	6:30 PM	27	Following Tues. & Thurs.	6:30 PM	27
<b>Ohlone</b>	2nd & 4th Wed.	7:15 PM	28	1st Monday	6:00 PM	15
<b>Alameda County Board of Education</b>	2nd & 4th Tues.	6:00 PM		Saturday following meeting	12 Midnight	15
<b>Washington Hospital</b>	4th Sunday	6:00 PM	28	See Note		

Note: Washington Hospital Rebroadcasts its board meetings on Channel 78 three times a day. Go to [www.whhs.com](http://www.whhs.com) for listings. Click on icon.

*Please take out this page and place it near your television set.*



**HEALTH CARE ISSUE FOR EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY**

At the LWVC 2005 convention, delegates voted to make health care an Issue for Education and Advocacy. In July, the board approved a plan that provides for statewide grass roots level work on League-supported legislation or an initiative to establish a single payer health care program in California. Currently the League supports SB 840, single payer legislation introduced by Senator Sheila Kuehl.

This bill began as SB 921 in the last legislative session and is still viable as it moves into its fourth year. In addition, the senator plans to introduce a companion finance bill for SB 840.

To facilitate planning and support for the ongoing campaign, five Leagues (Claremont, Oakland, San Luis Obispo County, Southwest Santa Clara Valley and Torrance) are participating in a pilot program to generate member education and community outreach, including a Speakers Bureau. The pilot Leagues have established health care committees and lined up speakers and also plan to lobby local governments for support of SB 840.

**League Lobby Day--Save the Date**

On May 8, 2006, the day after Leadership Council in Sacramento, the LWVC will hold a Lobby Day. Council attendees would be able to stay for an additional day to lobby legislators at the Capitol, and other League members are welcome to join in this exciting event. Closer to the date we will have more details about the priority legislation we will lobby, but we feel sure that some of our Issues for Education and Advocacy (Redistricting, Health Care, and State and Local Finances) will be on the program. We will give you more information as soon as plans are set. Please let us know at [advocacy@lwvc.org](mailto:advocacy@lwvc.org) if you are interested in participating.

**LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2006****Effective Leaders—Effective Leagues**

May 6 and 7

Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza, Sacramento, CA

**Workshops—Saturday, May 6**

Presidential Powwow

Emerging Leaders Enclave

It's About Time (and paper)

Using the Media to Push Reforms

Publishing *Pros and Cons* for Local Elections

**Workshops—Sunday, May 7**

How to Run a Local Election

Act Green!

Attracting and Retaining League Members

Early Bird Full Registration received before April 6: \$185

Full Registration received after April 6: \$200

See your latest **California Voter** for more information and a registration form.

**HAVE YOU SEEN?**

The Union City web site lately? Its elections page starts out with "Polling place lookup and sample ballot". For that information it gives the Smart Voter URL. Especially interesting is its web pages that give information about the city manager, city clerk and city attorney.

Newark's web site is just as impressive. It's easy to find city council agendas and background information. Its "Live, Work, Play and Explore" provides more useful information.

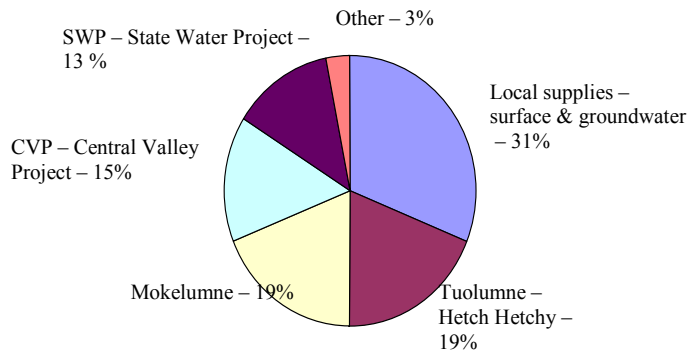
—Miriam Keller

**QUOTE:** My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought.

—Margaret Chase Smith

## A Conversation with John Weed

The source and governance of water supply in the Bay Area is complicated. This chart shows the Bay Area Water supply by source:



This report focuses on water supply and focuses in part on the Hetch Hetchy Water System. Miriam Keller, Alex Starr, Ursel Bloxson, and Sam Neeman met with John Weed, Region 5 Chair of the Association of California Water Agencies, to understand his views on the current Bay Area and Alameda County water situation. Mr. Weed provided insight into the agencies, their governance, and the challenges the Bay Area and State face regarding water supply.

The Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) was created on May 27, 2003 to represent the interests of 26 cities and water districts, and two private utilities, in Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties that purchase water on a wholesale basis from the San Francisco Regional Water System. This public agency with a staff of five oversees the Master Services Agreement with San Francisco. Each member including Alameda County has its own contract with San Francisco in addition to the master agreement. BAWSCA has done some good things including correcting metering problems and decreasing member costs. BAWSCA has the authority to issue bonds for structural projects and to buy water from alternate sources. Later we'll show why this is financially important.

The Hetch Hetchy water system is con-

trolled by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), appointed by the Mayor of San Francisco. The city built the system in the early 1900's and has a history of using some of the funds generated from the water system for other city uses. In 2002 concurrent with the bill creating BAWSCA, the legislature passed AB1823 requiring San Francisco to retrofit the San Francisco Bay Area regional water system as quickly as possible. The SFPUC is responsible for the \$4.3 billion Water System Improvements Program (WSIP) which includes seismic retrofitting. Weed feels the SFPUC has done well on a difficult project. He also noted San Francisco has other benefits, influence in Sacramento and vast amounts of land.

As shown on the chart San Francisco supplies only about 19% of the Bay Area water but it is a very important source because of its purity. At the present time water from Hetch Hetchy costs \$444/acre-foot. Based on current figures the cost will be \$1500/acre-foot after completion of the Water System Improvement Project (WSIP) in 2015. Only Hayward's has guaranteed prices in its direct contract with San Francisco.

BAWSCA is actively working on the new Master Services Agreement with San Francisco which will come into effect in 2009. The existing Master Contract be-

tween San Francisco and each of the water agencies will expire in 2009. The existing contract requires San Francisco to provide up to 184 million gallons per day in perpetuity. BAWSCA is looking to include remarketing rights and agreements among BAWSCA members. Also With costs at \$1500/acre-foot it becomes feasible to look at other sources of water including desalination. Weed noted there are desalination proposals in front of the U.S. Congress for the San Francisco Bay Area being considered at the local and regional levels of government. The U.S. Congress is considering financial subsidies for desalination.

So is BAWSCA a strong enough partner with San Francisco to represent 1.7 million suburban customers? Mr. Weed believed that BAWSCA has been an excellent advocate and overseer of the Master Services Agreement for the suburban customers. If the governance structure and oversight were to be changed, Mr. Weed thought it might be better to have a regional special water district be responsible for Hetch Hetchy.





**Why The Bay Matters**

by

**Will Travis****Executive Director****San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission**

presented at the

**State of the Bay Symposium****League of Women Voters of the Bay Area****Oakland, California****January 27, 2006**

I've been asked to explain why San Francisco Bay matters. Even though a lot of work has gone into making a scientific case for why the Bay matters as an environmental resource, it turns out that's hard to do. We don't draw the water we drink from the Bay. Except for herring, there aren't enough fish left in the Bay to support a commercial fishery. The water isn't warm enough to swim in on a regular basis. And the ships that ply the Bay can do so whether the water is clean or dirty. Wetlands are wonderful, but we've already destroyed most of what we had, and global warming may flood what's left along with those we're restoring.

Together, the Bay and Delta make up the largest estuary on the west coast of the American continent. A regular inflow of fresh water is essential to the health of any estuary. But the lion's share of the water that nature would like to put into the Bay ends up irrigating cotton in the Central Valley and filling swimming pools in Southern California. Epic political battles continue to be waged over who gets how much water in California. It appears unlikely that the Bay will emerge victorious in this water war any time soon.

The Bay is also the most urbanized estuary in the United States. Some seven million people live in our region—all of them uphill from the Bay. Gravity happens, so much of what flows off our roads, parking lots, farms and lawns becomes a witch's brew which finds its way to the Bay where it joins the so-called "legacy contaminants" buried under the Bay mud.

Clearly, the abuse that has been bestowed upon the Bay adds urgency to the demand that we protect what remains of this vast estuarine system and that we redouble our efforts to take advantage of every opportunity we can find to enhance and restore the Bay's resources. But, tragically, we have to admit that the primary environmental value of the Bay is what it once was and what it can become in the future—not what it is now.

So maybe it's best not to look to environmental science for an explanation of why the Bay is important. That may not be as big a problem as it might seem because science wasn't the driving force for protecting the Bay. Sylvia McLaugh-

lin, one of the founders of Save the Bay, once said, "We didn't save the Bay to improve water quality or protect wetlands. We saved it because we had never seen anything so beautiful." In short, the Bay was saved because it's pretty.

At first that may sound trivial. After all, beauty is ephemeral. It has no price. But, in fact, the Bay's beauty does have value. A house with a view of the Bay costs more than one without a Bay view. You pay a premium price for a hotel room facing the Bay. People will spend more for a mediocre dinner in a restaurant overlooking the Bay than for a sensational meal in a restaurant that's not on the waterfront.

A beautiful Bay is, indeed, an economic asset. In fact, many believe that the decision to save the Bay in 1965 laid the foundation for the economic prosperity our region has enjoyed over the past four decades. The Bay Area depends on bright, well-educated, innovative workers to make our knowledge-based economy hum. In competing with other regions for these workers our employers don't pay appreciably higher salaries even though their workers face outrageous housing costs, have to endure terrible traffic congestion and have to tolerate so-so public schools. Yet the workers continue to move here and stay here. Why? Because the Bay Area is a terrific place to live. We enjoy a sensational quality of life, a lot of which comes from the abundant, beautiful and healthy natural resources, like the Bay.

The Bay provides many other economic benefits. It is the highway for the new ferries that are lacing our waterfront communities together. The Bay is essential to our flourishing maritime industry. The Bay is the equivalent of a national park in our front yard where we can sail, swim, fish, kayak and play. And while not all the tourists who come to the City by the Bay leave their hearts in San Francisco, they do leave a lot of their money here.

The Bay is our region's most valuable economic resource. But I believe the Bay matters most not because of its scientific, environmental or economic value, but because of a role it plays that is more subtle, yet far more profound. In many ways, the Bay's greatest importance is its spiritual value.

The Bay is the heart, soul and essence of our region. The Bay gives our region its name and creates the sense of place which defines the community where we live. The Bay is our Eiffel Tower, our El Capitan, our Big Ben. It is the visual icon which gives our region its identity as a place different from everywhere else.

The fact that the Bay still exists is a living tribute to the three visionary women who started the Save the Bay movement half a century ago. By its very existence, the Bay is a testimonial to the spirit of American democracy.

The Bay is our connection to the global environment inland of the Delta and beyond the Golden Gate. The water in the Bay may have fallen as snow in the Sierra Nevada, washed over a waterfall in the southern Cascades, begun as a rain squall that spoiled an afternoon picnic of a family from Los Angeles or lapped the feet of a kid walking on a beach in Japan.

The Bay is a stopping point on the Pacific Flyway for the wild birds on their long migration between the Arctic and South America. The skies over the Bay are also enlivened by man-made birds carrying passengers between the rest of the world and our region.

The Bay is a stage where an engineering and global economic drama plays every day. Giant container ships sail into the Bay and make their way beneath majestic bridges to ports where their cargo is unloaded by machines out of Star Wars and placed on mile-long trains that head off toward the Sierra Nevada carrying goods from China to Wal-Marts across America.

The Bay is a library filled with the writings of Jack London, Dashiell Hammet and Herb Caen. In another part of this library the filled flatlands around the shoreline remind us that for over a century we treated the Bay like ordinary real estate. The wetlands which are emerging where the Bay was once diked for salt ponds represent redemption from our past sins and offer hope for a better future. Thus, the Bay is both a book of history and a hymnal. It provides both

a chilling record of our past mistakes, and offers inspiration to guide us in the future.

The islands that punctuate the Bay tell a story rich in texture, intrigue and inspiration. In the past, they were used for prisons, lighthouses, immigration centers, military outposts, hunting clubs and farms. Today they are wildlife refuges, villages, parks and hotels. And tomorrow they promise to become whole new communities, destination resorts and wilderness sanctuaries.

Many of us live in beautiful communities where we can gaze down upon the Bay from our homes. But even if we can't see the Bay, it finds us. On summer days when Sacramento is sweltering, the Bay engages in a meteorological magic that envelopes some of us in fog and provides natural air conditioning for the rest of us.

When you're on a small sailboat in the middle of the Bay and the winds are high and the night is dark, you are in a wilderness that is about as far from civilization as you can get. But when, on a warm, sunny afternoon, you're sitting behind third base at the ballpark whose name keeps changing, and you're watching the drama on the Bay beyond the outfield, and you've skipped out of work to come to the game, and you've taken the streetcar to the game, and you're going home on the ferry, AND the Giants are winning, you are experiencing the best of everything civilization has to offer.

For over a century the Bay was ringed with military bases filled with ships, planes, tanks, troops and sailors. Today, the Bay plays a more limited role in the defense of America. But the Bay is still one of the things that makes America worth defending.

The Bay may matter for environmental, scientific and economic reasons. But most of all, the Bay is important because it defines who we are, where we live, and why we are here. Without the Bay, the Bay Area would be just like everywhere else. And that, more than anything else, is why San Francisco Bay matters.





## REDISTRICTING

### REDISTRICTING REFORM— PRESSING THE LEGISLA- TURE INTO ACTION

Many Californians recognize that reform of the redistricting process is sorely needed. However, voters in the November special election understood that [Proposition 77](#) had too many flaws to be a viable option for reform and decisively rejected the measure.

The LWVC has consistently pressed for a redistricting process that encourages public participation and scrutiny, has fair criteria for drawing district boundaries, and transfers responsibility for redistricting to an independent commission that reflects the interests and diversity of all Californians. The League opposed Proposition 77 because of the makeup of its redistricting panel, the lack of a criterion respecting communities of interest in the drawing of lines, its call for a mid-decade redistricting, and its requirement of a vote of the people on every plan. We clearly stated that we sought redistricting reform but that this proposal was not acceptable.

Even before the defeat of Proposition 77, legislative leaders stated their desire to enact a reform measure in 2006. Since the election, the League has been active in leading a growing coalition of organizations to define standards for real reform and to prod the legislature into action. A meeting of interested groups in early December brought agreement on a set of principles for reform and a plan for approaching the legislature to craft a measure to be put before the voters.

Some of the principles we outlined reflect lessons learned from the failure of Proposition 77. Stakeholders from both sides in the election agree that an independent redistricting commission should be larger than in Prop. 77 and have membership that reflects the geographic and demographic diversity of the state; that redistricting should be conducted only once each decade; and that there will not be a required vote of the people to confirm the adopted plan.

Other principles include transparency of the process and a meaningful opportunity for interested parties and the public to participate effectively. We endorse a pri-

oritized list of criteria for district lines, beginning with equal population in accord with federal constitutional standards and compliance with constitutional and Voting Rights Act requirements with respect to minority populations. Criteria would also include contiguous districts as well as respect for communities of interest and for city and county boundaries. We agree that there must be restrictions on political activity, etc., to prevent conflict of interest on the part of redistricting commission members. However, defining the makeup of a truly independent commission and the method of its selection is proving to be a difficult task that will take thoughtful consideration from stakeholders and legislators.

We have just held the first of what promises to be a fruitful series of meetings with legislators and their staff to craft the best possible proposal and see that it receives consideration in a timely way. Equally important as our work at the Capitol, however, League members' grassroots lobbying of their representatives will help convince legislative leaders that this effort must be taken seriously.

Local League legislative interviews provide an excellent opportunity to begin this communication with assembly members and senators. If you have not yet met with your representatives, please be sure to do so. Consult the [Legislative Interview Kit](#) (PDF file) sent in the December UPDATE for the question and background information on redistricting and for assignments of local Leagues to coordinate making the appointments. And stay tuned for further requests for contacts with your legislators!

Polls taken shortly after the November election showed that large numbers of Californians support redistricting reform in principle. Reform themes that voters support strongly include the conflict of interest of politicians drawing lines, that voters should choose their representatives instead of being chosen, and that district lines should keep communities together. However, voters do not clearly see the relevance of redistricting in their daily lives. The polls show the importance of grassroots, nonpartisan reform efforts and the trust that voters have in the views of the League of Women Voters. Eventual

success at the ballot box will require support not only from recognized good-government groups and legislators of both parties, but also from other organizations representing all parts of the political spectrum and all facets of community life. While the League and many others focus on the legislative approach to putting redistricting reform on the ballot, Proposition 77 proponent Ted Costa and several others have submitted a new initiative that will be cleared for signature gathering by late February. The measure does not include some of the objectionable provisions of Prop. 77 but continues to require a vote of the people on new plans, and its approach to selection of the redistricting commission is quite different. The LWVC will analyze it and keep local Leagues informed.

For more information, visit the Redistricting page on the LWVC Web site, [www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/](http://www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/). You can sign up there to be on the League's redistricting activists e-list, or send an e-mail to [redistricting@lwvc.org](mailto:redistricting@lwvc.org).

Chris Carson, *Government Director*, [govt@lwvc.org](mailto:govt@lwvc.org)



## OAKLAND+SACRAMENTO: PORTS AS PARTNERS

As recent storms have demonstrated, a torrent of water will not disappear just because there isn't enough room in the usual channel. Instead, it will push and swirl into new channels until it can flow smoothly. Likewise, the increasing flood of imports from Asia in recent years has overflowed from ports in Southern California to the Port of Oakland and ports in the Northwest. Now it is moving upstream, literally, with a groundbreaking agreement between the Port of Oakland and the Port of Sacramento.

Advance planning meant that the Port of Oakland was not totally overwhelmed by the overflow when the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach proved unable to accommodate the surge of growth in shipments in 2003 and 2004. Expansion plans contained in the Port's Vision 2000 have made good use of land that became available as military bases were decommissioned, adding new cranes and docks, intermodal rail facilities, and dredging to accommodate larger container vessels. Extended hours have increased the number of trucks that can move in and out of the Port each day.



The surrounding communities are now a key choke point for the Port. Each container that comes to the Port can leave in one of two ways: one per truck, or several to a rail car. Extended hours may add to Port capacity, but those trucks must make their way through city streets where neighbors are impacted by noise, dust and diesel exhaust, and the hazards of heavy traffic. More trucks mean that freeways are more congested, even during off hours. Rail has its own impacts, including diesel exhaust, noise, lights, and interference with traffic at grade crossings. In addition, the growing cargo traffic is placing more of a strain on rail capacity in the Bay Area, at a time when there is also demand for passenger rail capacity on the same rail lines.

While Oakland has been scrambling to keep up with new cargo volumes, the Port of Sacramento, just 80 miles away on the Sacramento River, has been slowly starving for business. With ship access via a dredged channel only 30 feet deep, Sacramento's port cannot accommodate container ships. Its traditional bulk cargo, such as grain and wood chips, is going to different markets or using alternate shipping methods. A governing commission divided between four jurisdictions has had difficulty overcoming marketing and operating problems.

When the Port of Sacramento recently decided to reorganize its governance structure and look for an outside operator, the Port of Oakland saw an opportunity. Sacramento may not be accessible to container ships, but barges carrying containers could be moved from Oakland up the Sacramento Channel and the containers could be transferred to rail cars in Sacramento, relieving road and rail congestion in the Bay Area. Many of the containers that are trucked out of Oakland go to the Central Valley—Tracy, Modesto, Lathrop—to distribution centers which redistribute them locally or to other parts of the state. These distribution centers were originally in the Bay Area close to shipping, but have been displaced by escalating land values. Cargo delivered to Sacramento would be closer to the distribution centers, saving on trucking costs, gas consumption and air pollution. Unused commercial space at the Port of Sacramento could be sold or leased to new distribution centers, bringing additional revenue to the Port.

Discussions between officials at both Ports have resulted in an agreement that was recently approved by both Port commissions. A management company created by the Port of Oakland will now take over operation of the Port of Sacramento, initially for a six-month trial period, during which the Port of Oakland will assist the Port of Sacramento in analyzing its operations and attracting new business. "We will be leveraging our business alliances and creating opportunities that [Sacramento's] customers may not have had," says Harold Jones, spokesman for the Port of Oakland. At the end of the trial period, if all goes as planned, the Port of Oakland will sign a 1.5 year agreement to manage the Sacramento Port, and begin negotiations on a final agreement for an additional 8-year exclusive management rights contract.

Other parts of the agreement call for the two Ports to jointly market the Port of Sacramento, to develop the barging operation that would move cargo through the Delta from Oakland to Sacramento, and to lobby together to have the Sacramento Shipping Channel deepened to 35 feet to accommodate larger vessels.

This extremely innovative collaboration between the two ports has the potential to benefit both regions, by more evenly distributing the flow of cargo through northern California entry points. In addition, it illustrates a new statewide emphasis on accommodating the increasing volume of international trade, critical to the state's economy, while acknowledging that environmental and social impacts must be a part of the new goods movement patterns. In 2005, the issue of goods movement was included in the Bay Area's Regional Transportation Plan for the first time, and the first Faster Freight-Cleaner Air statewide conference was held in Oakland. The 2006 Faster Freight-Cleaner Air conference, held in Long Beach in January, promised to be larger than the first conference and had significant participation by community groups concerned about the impacts of cargo shipments on their neighborhoods.

Under an initiative begun by Governor Schwarzenegger, Caltrans and the California Air Resources Board have been implementing an accelerated joint planning process for new, environmentally sound goods movement strategies, and ports are included in at least one proposed state bond measure. As the state moves beyond the approach of "every port for itself", the Oakland/Sacramento agreement represents a promising new direction.

For more information:

—Leslie Stewart, Bay Area Monitor

Port of Oakland, Marilyn Sandifur, 510-627-1193, [msandifur@portoakland.com](mailto:msandifur@portoakland.com)  
California Goods Movement Action Plan, Phase II, <http://www.arb.ca.gov/gmp/gmp.htm>  
ARB Draft Emission Reduction Plan for Ports and International Goods Movement, <http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/gmerp/gmerp.htm>

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**Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, 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.

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The Citizens' Health Care Working Group, established by federal legislation, is sponsoring dialogues on health care around the country through May 2006. The group is hosting large town-hall meetings and smaller meetings of 100-300 people. Local organizations can initiate and run smaller meetings, and there will be a Web-based dialogue. A final report will be compiled on discussion outcomes and presented to the President and a number of key congressional committees. Leagues interested in participating should visit [www.citizenshealthcare.gov](http://www.citizenshealthcare.gov).

—LWVUS

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—Vesta Wilson



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### **CALENDAR**

Mon., Apr. 10	LWVFNUC Board Meeting	7:15 PM	Joanne Lander's home
Fri., Apr. 14	Education Committee	9:30 AM	Miriam Keller's home
Wed., Apr. 19	Cable Taping	2:00 PM	Comcast Studios
Mon., Apr. 24	Unit Meeting—Brown Act Training		
Wed., Apr. 26	Action Committee	9:30 AM	Marilyn Singer's home
May 6—7	Leadership Council 2006	All day Saturday Half day Sunday	Sacramento
Mon., May 8	League Lobby Day	TBA	TBA
Sat., May 13	LWVBA Council	SF Bay Motel	Sausalito