

Voter

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



St. Patrick's Day, March 17



March, 2006

In lieu of a March Unit Meeting, go to one of these:



**29TH ANNUAL
EDSOURCE
FORUM**
ON CALIFORNIA
EDUCATION POLICY

29TH EDSOURCE CONFERENCE March 17th, at Fremont Marriott

Speakers: **Jack O'Connell**, Superintendent of Public Instruction,

Glee Johnson, President, State Board of Education

Panel:

Implications for Schools and Districts

Joe Nuñez, California Teachers Association

Carl Cohn, Superintendent of San Diego City Schools

Dale Vigil, Superintendent of Haward Unified School District,

Kelvin Lee, Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District

Funding: Accountability's Companion Piece

Ted Mitchell, Chair, Governor's Advisory Committee on Education Excellence

Panel:

How Much is Enough? How Best to Spend it? To What End?

Mary Perry, Deputy Director EdSource, Moderator

Susanna Loeb, Associate Professor, Stanford University, School of Education and Director, California School Funding Research Project

Ron Bennett, President and CEO, School Services of California

Jon Sonstelie, Professor UC Santa Barbara Department of Economics

Audience Q&A will follow each section. Audience poll on school funding issues will be taken in the morning and reported out in the afternoon.

This year's Forum will be moderated by **Chris Croll**, Chair, Cross & Joftus, LLC.

Pre-Forum workshop: A Guided Tour of the Ed-Data Website

Check-in, 7:45 AM

Workshop, 8:15 AM

Program, 9 AM—3PM

Registration:

\$60 for EdSource subscribers, \$70 others. Fee includes pre-Forum workshops, program, information packet, continental breakfast and lunch.

Register online: [www. EdSource. Org](http://www.EdSource.Org) or call 650-917-9481



A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT Friday, March 17, 2006, 9:00 AM—2:00 PM San Lorenzo Community Hall, 377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

Keynote Speaker: California Attorney General
Bill Lockyer (12:30 PM)

Questions: Are the Brown Act and California Public Records Act doing what legislators intended? What changes would be recommended in either of the two laws?

The Brown Act and the California Public records Act (CPRA) From citizens' perspective.

Panel 1: (9 AM) **Terry Franke**, Moderator, Californians Aware, **Sara Cox**, Berkeley City Clerk, **Dan Purnell**, Executive Director, Oakland Public Ethics Commission

The Brown Act and the CPRA from the perspective of public officials—elected or appointed

Panel 2: (10:40 AM) **Richard Winnie**, Moderator, Alameda County Counsel, **Manuela Albuquerque**, Berkeley City Attorney, **Ted Prim**, State Attorney General's Office (invited)

How can we continue to improve transparency in Government?

Panel 3: (1:15 PM) **James Wheaton**, First Amendment Project, **Richard Winnie**, Al Co Counsel, **Terry Francke**, Californians Aware, **Thomas Peele**, Contra Costa Times
RSVP by 3/10: Send check to LWVEA, PO Box 2234, Castro Valley, 94546 \$20.00 with reservation by 3/10 includes lunch and all panel presentations. Cost after 3/10—\$25.00

For information:

E-mail lwsun@comcast.net or call Susan Barba at 510-538-9678

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

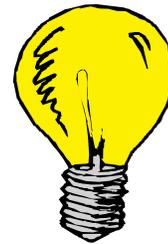
LWVUS is holding a national forum "Sunshine Week: Are We Safer in the Dark." at the National Press Club. To learn more about this event go on the LWVUS web site and click on Sunshine Week. One of the items that LWVUS has included in Sunshine Week is to award grants to local Leagues to put on a Forum in their locale. The Alameda County Council of Leagues won one of the grants and is receiving \$1000 to put on a forum in Alameda County. The flyer in this Voter will give you all the details about attending the Forum. It is for elected officials, appointed officials and the general public. It should help you understand how much information must be given to the public about the public's business. If we the public do not exercise our rights to know what is being done in our name, officials will keep more transactions private. The San Jose City Council is living proof of this. In our Tri-City area we have examples of councils and boards that reveal nothing to some who try very hard to inform the public and spend hours hashing out the details in their public council meetings.

Unfortunately on the same day, EdSource will hold its 29th Forum "School Accountability and Funding: Can California Get It Right?" right here in Fremont at the Marriot. Clear your calendar on St. Patrick's Day and attend one of these two provocative events.
—Miriam Keller

BOARD BRIEFS

At its February Board meeting, the Board

- heard a proposal for an electronic documentation process,
- set the date of the Annual Meeting for June 3,
- approved the results of the program planning meeting,
- approved the report from the Energy consensus meeting,
- reviewed details of the Sunshine Forum on March 17,
- chose to do a Brown Act forum with the City of Fremont and
- approved a Weekender Fundraiser on April 8, 9.

ENERGY STUDY REPORT PAGE 4

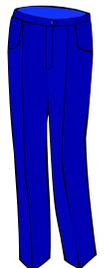
Weekender's Fashion Fundraiser Drop By Saturday or Sunday, April 8 and 9

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



THANKS TO OUR LOCAL DONORS

Tina Bonaccorsi
 Mavis Brown
 Alice Ching
 Ann Crosbie
 Ellen Culver
 Mary Ann Dillon
 John Dutra
 Barbara Friedrich

Susan Gearhart
 Richard Godfrey
 Bill Harrison
 Carolyn Hedgecock
 Jean Holmes
 Miriam Keller
 Pat Lewis
 Anne Macleod

Robert Monkman
 Nina Moore
 Margaret Palmer
 Sandra Pantages
 Kathy Steel-Sabo
 Sister Marjorie Wakelin
 Holly Bell Walter
 Pauline Weaver

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD WORKERS.

Opportunities exist for the on board positions of program vice-president and secretary, and the off board position of meeting meeter/greeter. The nominating committee members are dedicated to having the board work harmoniously together as a team. We are looking for members who are willing to:

- * learn on-the-job if necessary
- * embrace the League's nonpartisan policy
- * grow in skills and ability to make the team concept work.

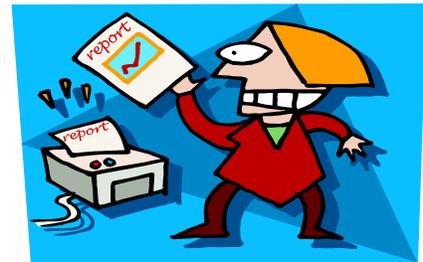
If you are new to the League or have never served on the board, fear not. In our League we are lucky to have one board member whose sole job is support all the other board members, our leadership trainer, Alex Starr. Alex started off 11 years ago as co-chair for membership and has served in many different capacities since then. She is willing to "hold your hand" for as long as necessary until you feel comfortable in your job.

Board members commit to:

- * attend board meetings
- * help in overall planning and decision making
- * support and attend League activities
- * promote membership.

Come join the fun! Let one of the nominating committee members know you're ready for this new challenge.

Jean Holmes, chair, 656-1246
 Muriel Nolan, 659-8868
 Alice Johnson, 792-4169
 Sister Marjorie Wakelin, 624-450
 Alex Starr, 656-6877

**ACTION COMMITTEE**

March 13—17 is Sunshine Week. It's a week when Leagues across the country are advocating for transparency in government. Locally, LWVFNUC is cooperating with other East Bay Leagues to sponsor a forum on March 17 in San Lorenzo featuring panels and keynote speaker, Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

LWVFNUC decided to "visit" all the elected boards and commissions in our three cities to deliver invitations to the event and to also give them the heads up on our up-coming Brown Act Training in April. The training will be done cooperatively with the City of Fremont. If you were watching televised meetings the last week of February, you saw your League in action as we spoke during the public comment times.

Leaguers speaking in your name were: Ellen Culver, Alex Starr, Kay Emanuele, Barbara Friedrich, Jane Mueller, Letha Saldana, Susan Gearhart, Miriam Keller, Lara York, Marilyn Singer and Syeda Yunus.

__Marilyn Singer

LWV FNUC & CA Study Energy

LWVFNUC's State Energy Study Unit was presented by Susan Gearhart, Alex Starr, Syeda Yunus and Miriam Keller. Jane Turnbull, Chair of the State Energy Study, was the keynote speaker, and she stressed the League's participation in formulating energy policy for the State of California. The State League is actively involved with energy legislation and respected in Sacramento. She encouraged all local leagues to work on energy policies "close to home". We hope this overview will help you understand California's Energy situation today.

Electricity

Consumers pay for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. Many of the increases we find on our bills are due to the effects of deregulation.

In 1996 California began to deregulate or unbundle the generation and delivery of energy in an attempt to decrease costs via competition. Generators were sold and released from government regulations. Under deregulation individuals, businesses and communities can form associations for direct access with alternative suppliers (generators) to decrease energy costs.

In 2001 generators held back energy in peak usage periods, creating a crisis and driving up prices. FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, did not respond to California's repeated requests to cap prices. California then signed long term power contracts to assure price stability. We will be paying high prices until these contracts run out. This deregulation plan backfired.

Today California has adequate electricity 99% of the time. Peak periods such as hot summer days still pose a problem. California generates 80% of electricity needed from a variety of sources. A majority is generated using oil and hydroelectric, some from wind and solar. There are also "peakers" or emergency plants and four usable nuclear plants. None of these sources is without challenges, our infrastructure is old, droughts affect hydroelectric plants, peakers are expensive and polluting, our nuclear plants need refurbishing and many residents do not want nuclear power or high polluting plants near them. Reducing usage is still the best way to handle our resource problems. Tax credits, efficient appliances, green building, and sensible pricing are some strategies that can help.

So, once generated, are there adequate transmission and delivery systems to

get the power to us? Bringing in out of state power is difficult to do and drives up the price of energy purchased on the spot market. It has been mandated that 20% of California's generators must be improved by 2010, but they may not be situated near transmission lines. The Independent System Operator (ISO) is responsible for delivering the power, but who will build and finance the needed new transmission lines is still unresolved.

Natural Gas and LNG (Liquid Natural Gas)

Eighty five percent of California's natural gas is supplied from out of state and our pipelines are not sited to deliver it efficiently. Transportation in cooling tank cars has environmental and safety issues as LNG is highly combustible.

Also, as natural gas reservoirs deplete, the costs of pumping the gas increases; refining requires a lot of energy.

LNG supplies are low and costs are high. It is convenient to use, but safe storage areas need to be established. CA State Assemblyman Joe Simitian has a bill giving the state primacy in determining LNG terminal sites. FERC now tells the states where plants will be sited so this is an area of conflict.

Water and Energy

The interdependency of energy and water policy is not always obvious but needs to be considered in any energy policy. Converting Sierra snow pack into potable water uses 20% of CA's energy. Of that 20 %, agriculture uses 85-90 %. Urban conservation is mandatory; agricultural conservation is voluntary. As the state's water needs increase, energy usage increases. Solutions to increasing water supply affect overall energy needs. Should farmers change the types of crops grown? Water desalination is energy intensive. Should gray water use, which is less energy-intensive, be increased? Should new dams be built and at what cost to the environment? Should areas where water is not metered such as Sacramento be metered? Using less electricity, gas and water may be the most effective way to increase supplies.

The Role of the Legislature

The LWV supports the creation of an integrated Energy Policy Report and a designated state office of energy responsible for bringing all aspects of energy policy together, possibly a California Department of Energy. Some areas being looked at include more renewables such as solar and

wind, and a bill calling for 30% renewables should be in place by 2020, but it will not include municipalities. Photo-voltaic power needs to be encouraged further by tax write-offs. We need state and regional planning for land corridors for transmission lines. The role of FERC needs to be clarified and taken out of the political arena. Attempts at regionalizing our power are moving forward, and California is in a consortium with the Pacific Northwest. This can be beneficial as the states have high power usage at different times of the year.

Energy policy is complicated, and Leagues in California continue to work together to study and develop positions which help us determine which Legislative actions to support.

**GLOSSARY****California State Energy Agencies – The Alphabet Soup of Energy**

CEC (California Energy Commission) In charge of planning, pricing, licensing, energy efficiency, conservation, research projects, emergencies and appliances. This is a prototype for state energy department; it must to report to the legislature every 2 years.

CPUC (California Public Utilities Commission) Regulates IOU's, service standards, safety rules, restructures and billing activities. Currently it is negotiating with FERC about gas storage locations along the California coast. CPUC is the agency that led us into deregulation. Some people think they need more competent commissioners.

CAISO (California Independent System Operators) Responsible for the electrical transportation grid, its flow, cost and maintenance. They handle 70% of the grids in California, but do not own them. They have a hierarchy of generators to use, and it is their job to keep the power flowing. They forecast needs and keep a 7 % cushion of available power. They are not a public agency and therefore not subject to the Brown Act.

FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Has no state jurisdiction. It sets interstate rates. It is responsible for overseeing the energy market and preventing manipulation.

ISO Independent System Operators

IOU Independently Owned Utilities (PG&G, San Diego Gas& Power, So Ca Edison) —Action Committee

CONVERSATIONS WITH...

ANA APODACAC

Ana Apodaca, the newest elected member of the Newark City Council took time from her job as Community and Government Relations Manager for Kaiser Permanente to meet with Kay Emanuele and Ursel Bloxsom to discuss her new role in the City Council. Ms. Apodaca discussed a number of areas including development, gangs, and the state of the city.

One of her major goals is to see the new senior center built. The city received a grant to build a senior-center , but budget remains an issue. Apodaca views affordable housing for young people and meeting the needs for future growth as one of Newark's major challenges. Two large areas, Areas #2 and #4 in Newark are still to be developed. She foresees Dumbarton Rail running through Area 2 and expressed her support for public transportation. She covered transportation issues while working as Senator Liz Figueroa's assistant, so she is not a novice in this area. She expressed there is not much concern at this point about Patterson Ranch development. They are waiting for the EIR.

Ms. Apodaca shared that gangs are growing in Newark and that they know no geographical boundaries. The Newark Police Chief is working with the School District to encourage teamwork between parents, School Resource Officers, and Administration. Also, there is Southern Alameda County Task Force working to address the problem.

With regard to the state of the city, Ms. Apodaca praised the city staff and felt that they contributed to smoothly running council meetings. The city has a healthy budget reserve and is looking to find new businesses to replace those that have moved to Pacific Commons. She feels that Newark is business friendly city.

The interview ended with a conversation about the National Science Foun-

dation (NSF) grant that the school district has received that will enable underrepresented students to earn a certificate in Biotech in three years at Newark Memorial High School. The student can then go to Ohlone in Newark for one year and become certified to work in a company in Newark. Ohlone campus is due to open in 2007 which is perfect timing for this new program. There will soon be a fundraiser for home computers and text books.

Ms. Apodaca signed up to be a member of the League at the conclusion of our meeting. We welcome her, and wish her well in her new role.

—Kay Emanuele

JOHN DUTRA

Will we have water after the "Big One"?



Action Committee would like to thank John Dutra for meeting with us in late November to share his insights on the Bay Area's water situation. LWVFNUC is studying, among other things, energy and water and working with the Bay Area and State leagues to develop positions on these issues. Here is a synopsis of our meeting.

Mr. Dutra started the conversation by stating the recent Hetch Hetchy legislation is aimed at seismic retrofitting. The State Legislature, prompted by businesses and industry, is very concerned about the state of the Hetch Hetchy water system and San Francisco's ability to address its problems. The Hetch Hetchy water system is in serious need of repair to withstand a major earthquake. The system is managed by the SFPUC (San Francisco Public Utilities Commission) though it serves 26 Bay Area communities and businesses. San Francisco built the dam and water system and has management of it since the Raker Bill passed in Congress in 1913.

Hetch Hetchy water is especially im-

portant to industries using highly technical equipment such as New Untied Motors Manufacturing Inc. (NUMMI) in Fremont. Changing water supplies is a major concern for these industries because their technologies depend on using water with the purity that Hetch Hetchy delivers. Dutra believes water supply, delivery and storage is an infrastructure problem and must be addressed by the State.

Bill AB2058, passed in 2002, created the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) as a water district; in Dutra's opinion the bill did not give much strength to the agency in dealing with San Francisco regarding the Hetch Hetchy system. However, it is a first step, and he thought governance of Hetch Hetchy could gradually be altered to better represent all customers of the system. He believes a joint powers or special district is possible if enough pressure is brought to bear.

The Bay Area Council (150 businesses and industries) and the Silicon Valley Leadership Council could be the driving force for change. This is a crucial business and economic issue for Silicon Valley, the entire Bay Area, and ultimately for the State's economy.

The current San Francisco project for the Hetch Hetchy system includes seismic retrofitting and other upgrades to the system; pressure could be brought to bear to split the project into two allowing for a priority on retrofitting. Mr. Dutra expects this pressure to come from business interests in Silicon Valley urging their legislators to support the split.

Polls of Californians say they are concerned about education, transportation, housing and healthcare in that order. Few people are thinking about water, but it is an area we all need to be concerned about. Success depends on environmentalists, labor, business and industry backing legislation for change.

—Action Committee



LIBRARY BONDS

League Supports Library Bond Act on June 2006 Ballot

At its January meeting, The League of Women Voters of California board of directors voted to support the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2006. The measure will appear on the June 6, 2006 ballot. The LWVC will sign the ballot argument endorsing the measure.
The library bond act of 2006:

- ▶ Places a \$600 million general obligation bond measure on the 2006 statewide primary election ballot to finance the acquisition, construction or remodeling of public library facilities
- ▶ Provides grants to a city, county, city and county, or library district that provides public library services
- ▶ Requires that each grant recipient provide 35 percent of the project costs, including donated land, and that the state provide the remaining 65 percent, up to a maximum of \$20 million

▶ Gives first priority for up to half of the funds to eligible but unfunded applicants from the 2000 library bond act

▶ Requires that up to \$25 million be available for joint-use projects for public education institutions.

Proposition 85, approved by California voters in 1988, provided \$75 million in state bonds for 24 library construction/renovation projects. In 2000 the voters approved Proposition 14, a \$350 million bond for library construction/renovation, funding an additional 45 projects. A 2003 State Library survey revealed 579 unfunded library construction projects in California, at a cost of \$4.4 billion.

Local government budgets have not been able to keep up with library service and construction needs. In recent years state budgets have reduced funding to local governments, which in turn have reduced the funds available for library construction. Additionally, state funding for operational library expenses under the Public Library Foundation (PLF) has been reduced from a high of \$56.8 million in 2000-2001 to \$15.7 million in 2003-2004, placing further

pressure on local government budgets.

Today, many communities do not have adequate library facilities to serve diverse needs, current facilities do not comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) or seismic standards, and the buildings are not equipped to support current information technologies required for literacy and education. Public libraries are safe places for students to complete homework assignments and for adults to continue their learning and skill development. This bond measure is critical for strengthening our educational system. There is a growing "digital divide" between those who can afford technology and those who cannot, and libraries provide access to everyone. This bond measure will strengthen partnerships between schools and libraries. A campaign committee, Californians for Literacy and Community Libraries, has been organized to support the measure. Visit the committee's Web site, <http://yesforlibraries.com/>, to find material to assist communities in their efforts to pass the library bonds.

Karen Butter, *LWVC Off-Board Program Director, Public Libraries*,
kab@library.ucsf.edu

Reminder: Reproductive Freedom Day March 29

League members from around the state will want to participate in the Reproductive Freedom Capitol Day held by the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom (CCRF) at the Sacramento Convention Center from 9:00 to 4:30 on March 29. A save-the-date flyer and registration form appeared in the December UPDATE. Please remind your members to register early and to watch www.cacr.org for more information about the day's agenda.

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 if you are interested in participating.

John D. Sullivan, *Legislation Director*, legislation@lwvc.org

CORRECTIONS TO THE FEBRUARY VOTER

Action Committee, Page 3: The last paragraph and the last sentence reads: "Much of this relates to Hetch Hetchy and we are working with the Bay Area League to study its governance." The Bay Area League or LWVBA is not studying Hetch Hetchy governance.

Bay Area League Meeting, Page 3, second sentence reads: "On February 24th, Spreck Rosekrans, a senior water policy analyst with Environmental Defense now working for the San Francisco PUC, will discuss 'Paradise Regained'" Spreck Rosekrans has never worked for San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.



CLEAN MONEY

Ground breaking Legislation is making its way through the California State Legislature—Assembly Bill 583: The California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act of 2006.

This January, for the first time in the history of the California Legislature, the issue of public financing of campaigns was passed by the State Assembly.

This legislation was introduced to provide a clear and innovative alternative to the deluge of big money in California politics. Corruption scandals in Washington D.C. and Southern California have shown the abuses of special interest money. We can no longer ignore the corrosive influence of money on the legislative process. Clean Money - public financing of campaigns - is an idea whose time has come.

AB 583 will establish a voluntary system of public financing of campaigns for all statewide and legislative races, similar to that in Maine and Arizona. This system allows any candidate - who raises a substantial number of small contributions from individuals residing in the district they would represent and who agrees not to take contributions from any special interest - to receive public financing of their campaign.

The next stop for AB 583 is the Senate. If passed by the Senate, the bill will be heard in a conference committee composed of members of both the Assembly and the Senate, where the final details of the legislation will be crafted. It will be placed on the Governor's Desk and if signed, would go on the ballot for approval by the voters.



—LWVC

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2006

"Effective Leaders--Effective Leagues"

In February local League presidents will receive the "Call to Leadership Council 2006" to be held May 6-7 at the Downtown Plaza Holiday Inn in Sacramento. LWVUS President Kay Maxwell will be our guest at Council and will address the attendees during the weekend. Ideas are percolating for other speakers at the meeting and will be finalized in the near future. We are also considering the feasibility of having a pre-workshop focusing on energy and a Lobby Day at the Capitol on Monday, May 8.

Workshops will provide fresh ideas to be used for outreach, advocacy, membership and even how to manage all the "hardcopy" and e-mail accumulated by Leagues. We are planning mini-workshops for both established and emerging leaders. With this in mind, we encourage attendance by at least one voting delegate from each League (typically the President) to adopt the 2006-2007 budget. Other League members are invited and encouraged to attend to benefit from the networking and training opportunities that will be offered. In addition to the traditional "call," each League member will receive information about the Council. We will offer online registration which can be used to register single or multiple members with the same payment. Online registration will accept both immediate credit card payment and payment by check within two weeks after input of the information.

—LWVC

CONVENTION 2007

Mark your calendars, Convention 2007 will held May 18 - 20 at the Bakersfield Doubletree Inn.

QUOTE:

The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government.
~George Washington's Farewell Address, September 17, 1796

WATER WORK: BAY AREA WATER FORUM BEGINS REGIONAL PLAN

With the news of two major state grants for regional water planning, leaders of the loose coalition of stakeholders called the Bay Area Water Forum are scurrying to create a more formal structure for administering the grants and creating the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) by January 2007 (see *June/July 2005 issue*). Meanwhile, the forum also continues to function as an arena for participants to hear and debate a wide range of water issues affecting the Bay Area.

The Bay Area Water Forum is an expansion of the ABAG/CALFED Task Force, a policy committee of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which was convened to assess and respond to the impacts of CALFED's policies on the Bay. Task Force members include local elected officials serving on ABAG, local water district officials, and key environmental groups; Water Forum participants include additional local officials, community groups and representatives of various water-related special districts.

Although ABAG provided support for the Water Forum as it was forming, funding for water planning has dried up at the agency, and the Water Forum is now operating with a budget funded by member donations and grants. A formal structure will create an entity which can receive additional donations and also enter into agreements with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), a potential source of additional resources and staff support.

At recent meetings of the Water Forum, attendees discussed a draft Memorandum of Understanding, as well as updates on CALFED, IRWMP grants and planning, and a draft work plan for 2006. Much of the work plan focuses on creating the IRWMP, but additional goals include coordinating regional and local perspectives on water resources, participating in creating new state water bonds, and providing a networking opportunity for a variety of groups concerned with water issues.

The Forum will also continue to be an opportunity to hear speakers on water-related programs and projects around the state which are of interest to the Bay Area. For example, the December meeting included presentations on the Bay Institute's Ecological Scorecard and an infrastructure scorecard prepared by the local chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers

IRWMP Progress: The planning grants already announced by DWR will fund two simultaneous work programs which will ultimately be combined in the IRWMP. Consultants hired for the IRWMP preparation are working with the Forum's Technical Coordinating Committee to integrate the four draft components, which were already under way.

Zone 7 Water District is serving as the formal lead on the wastewater/recycled water and flood protection/storm water components of the IRWMP, while the Coastal Conservancy will oversee preparation of the components on water supply/water quality and watershed management/habitat restoration. Some components still need considerable work and resources, particularly storm water planning where few agencies have adequate funding or staff to assist in planning. For others, what is needed is integration of existing plans, such as mandated water supply plans prepared regularly by water districts.

The watershed management and habitat restoration component is being developed by the State Coastal Conservancy, partnering groups and agencies as the San Francisco Bay Area Watershed Plan. It is intended to be "a stand-alone document to guide regional watershed management, habitat protection, and restoration planning efforts", as well as an IRWMP component. Based on existing watershed plans, it builds on the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Project, and is compatible with current planning such as the Uplands Goals Project.

One advantage of using existing plans is that they have already been through a public comment process, and most new issues will be related to how they are integrated in the final regional plan. This is important because the January 2007 completion date will be challenging given the complexity of the IRWMP and the diversity of the region.

Outreach to communities and stakeholders to educate them on the plan and get input will be critical but also difficult, and must be done within a demanding timeframe. The IRWMP process includes major workshops are scheduled for February 27 (see *below*), April, June and October 2006, but additional briefings for cities, counties and agencies will be pursued as well.

CALFED Status: After several intensive months of financial auditing by the California Department of Finance and operational review by the Little Hoover Commission, the confederation of state and federal agencies known as CALFED has refocused its attention on projects directly related to the Delta. Despite clear evidence of progress, the reviews pinpointed several areas where CALFED was not meeting expectations, including Delta levees, and others which had arisen recently and needed attention, particularly the steep decline in the numbers of Delta organisms.

As statewide integrated regional water management planning, headed by DWR, takes on some of the issues originally assigned to CALFED, the proposed new CALFED program centers on a 100-Year Delta Vision. The framework for the Vision is scheduled to be completed by December 2006 and will address water, agriculture, the environment, transportation, infrastructure and flood control (including levees) and land-use decisions. Over the next 2 years, additional funding must be found to support this strategic planning. Funding must also be secured for major levee improvements. New state infrastructure bond proposals contain varying amounts of funding for levees and flood protection.

Some members of the ABAG/CALFED Task Force have voiced concern that as the CALFED focus tightens on the Delta, the impacts of Delta policy on the Bay itself may not be addressed. It is likely to be up to the Bay Area Water Forum, beginning with the IRWMP, to create a plan for the whole Bay Area and serve as its voice in state water policy and funding debates.

—Bay Area Monitor



OLD RAILS, NEW TRAINS: RAIL EXPANSIONS AHEAD

Demand for passenger rail is increasing in the Bay Area as the travel time becomes competitive with congested highways. Often existing service or facilities can be easily expanded, so that a number of proposed projects within and beyond the region could be well underway before the completion of the long-range Regional Rail Plan (see [October/November 2005 issue](#)). They include Caltrain service to Salinas, the Sonoma/Marin SMART system, a BART extension to eastern Contra Costa County, and extra trains and stations for the Capitol Corridor system.

An environmental impact report (EIR) will be available in February 2006 for the proposed extension of Caltrain service from Gilroy to Salinas by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), linking Monterey County to the Bay Area by rail. Using Union Pacific tracks currently also used by Amtrak, one or two trains a day could run to Salinas at the end of the day, lay over and return the following morning. The commuter service expansion is expected to cost approximately \$75 million and could begin by 2009. TAMC plans a rail or bus link between the Castroville station on this line and Marina near Monterey. A transportation sales tax which will appear on the county's ballot in June 2006 could provide \$17.5 million in local funding for these rail projects.

SMART released its EIR in November 2005 for a proposed rail system running from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to Larkspur in Marin County (see [February/March 2003 issue](#)). The service would use the old Northwest Pacific rail right-of-way, roughly paralleling Highway 101. The project includes 14 rail stations, shuttle service at selected stations, and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway connecting the stations and providing an additional alternative mode of transit along the transportation corridor. Capital costs are estimated at \$340 million, and the pathway would cost \$70 million. Operating costs would be supported through a district-wide sales tax which is expected to be on the November 2006 ballot in Marin and Sonoma Counties. The draft EIR for the planned BART extension to eastern Contra Costa County, known as e-BART, is scheduled for public review in Fall 2006. Initially the service might be an express bus, with the potential to convert to small diesel trains in the future, but would not be conventional BART construction. It could utilize existing freight rail tracks for at least part of the 23-mile route to minimize construction costs; alternatively, space for transit has been made available in the median of Highway 4 as it has been widened. Planning partners include BART, the cities of Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and Brentwood, Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, Tri-Delta Transit and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Capitol Corridor trains offer an alternative to I-80 and I-680 between the Bay Area and Sacramento. The intercity rail system is administered by a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and operated by Amtrak. A concept and implementation plan has recently been developed for an Auburn-Oakland Regional Rail Service, which would augment the current Capitol Corridor service. Despite a separate funding structure, the new service would use the same equipment, staff, and fare structure as the Capitol Corridor trains and would appear to passengers as simply an addition to the Capitol Corridor service. Six additional "trainsets" will be needed to implement the new service, each consisting of one locomotive and five coach cars. Ultimately, new stations would be built at Bowman near Auburn, Antelope, Swanston, West Sacramento, and Benicia, in addition to the stations already being built at Fairfield/Vacaville and Hercules and a Dixon station which is in the early stages of development.

Planning has been overseen by a task force with representatives from five counties along the route—Placer, Sacramento, Yolo, Solano and Contra Costa—as well as the Capitol Corridor JPA, BART, the Union Pacific railroad which owns the tracks used by Capitol Corridor trains, Caltrans, and community members. A JPA structure, probably a modified Capitol Corridor JPA, would be used to administer the new service.

At this time, federal funding is available only for the engineering of the project, so initial operations will need funding from the sponsoring agencies. Project phasing calls for adding 6 daily trips and completing the Fairfield/Vacaville and Hercules stations by 2010, at a cost of \$67.8 million. Phase 2 would add the Dixon station and additional track and train capacity by 2015, at a cost of \$232 million. Phase 3 would add five new stations and improve three others by 2020, at a cost of \$80.1 million. Key factors in completion of the plan are the availability of funding, particularly from state and federal sources, and agreement with Union Pacific on how to operate additional passenger service on the shared rail line.

Planning costs money, but construction and operation cost far more. Funding uncertainties are the main stumbling block to speedy implementation of all the proposed rail projects. The e-BART project is partially funded through increased bridge tolls from Regional Measure 2, the renewal of the Contra Costa transportation sales tax, and other state and regional funds, but a gap remains. New sales tax measures must pass in Sonoma, Marin and Monterey Counties to support those proposals. The Auburn-Oakland service will be drawing from local transportation sales tax funds and a variety of other funding sources to fund Phase 1, with later phases heavily dependent on gaining additional federal money in future transportation bills. Proposed state infrastructure bonds could either assist the projects, or adversely affect them by appearing on the same ballot as local tax measures, and may not contain additional funding for rail.

Unless funding becomes an insurmountable issue, however, one or more of these proposed projects are likely to expand the passenger rail network through and beyond the Bay Area, and become part of the long range picture for rail in the region.

—Leslie Stewart, Bay Area Monitor

For more information:

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Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit, info@sonomamarintrain.org, <http://www.sonomamarintrain.org>
e-BART, 866-596-BART, <http://www.ebartproject.org>

Auburn-Oakland Regional Rail Service Concept and Implementation Plan is available through the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency - contact David Melko, 530-823-4090, dmelko@pctpa.org



BOND MEASURES

State and Local Finances program director Anne Henderson reports that both Governor Schwarzenegger and Senate President pro Tem Don Perata are talking about going to the ballot with bond measures for a variety of projects to repair the state's infrastructure. The Governor is eyeing a mega measure of \$50 billion for a broad array of projects, while Perata is proposing a more modest \$10 billion measure. Capitol watchers believe the Governor's measure at that level of funding is unlikely to draw support. The deficit reduction bonds already passed pushed our debt close to what is considered a prudent limit, and it is expensive debt because the state's credit rating is among the lowest in the nation. Perata's, however, could draw support, depending on just what the mix of projects turns out to be. A \$10 billion high speed rail bond is already scheduled for the November ballot, but it could be put off (for the second time) to clear the way for the broader measure. A \$600 million bond measure for public libraries is slated for the June 2006 ballot.

An increase in the tobacco tax to fund a variety of health-related programs is the subject of another new initiative that will be scrutinized by the LWVC from the standpoint of several League positions. Until a few days ago, two initiatives had been proposed; each would have increased the tax on cigarettes by \$1.50 per pack and raised an estimated \$1.4 billion per year. Sponsors of those two competing measures have just announced that they will scrap their individual measures and join forces to place a proposal on the November 2006 ballot.

The first of the original pair of initiatives was sponsored by the California Hospital Association and would have given about two-thirds of the new revenue to hospitals for emergency services. Proponents had gathered signatures on petitions that will now be discarded. The second measure would have earmarked about a third of the funds raised for children's health insurance, a third for disease research, and a fifth for tobacco prevention and control. Its proponents included anti-tobacco groups like the cancer, heart and lung associations as well as children's advocates, community clinics and nurses.

The joint tobacco tax initiative would raise the tax by \$2.60 per pack, bringing in approximately \$2.27 billion annually. The

funds would be distributed to treatment services (53 percent) such as hospital emergency care, nursing education, community clinics, and emergency physician services; prevention services (42 percent), including children's health insurance, tobacco control, education, and enforcement programs, and cancer, heart and asthma prevention and control programs; and tobacco-related disease and cancer research (5 percent).

The price of a pack of cigarettes is currently about \$4, of which 87 cents is tax. The proposed increase would raise the price to more than \$6.50 and move California's tax rate from less than the average of other states to the highest in the nation. It is recognized that higher prices reduce tobacco sales and thus reduce revenues over time. —LWVC

CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION IN FREMONT?

Cities throughout California are experiencing an increase of condominium conversion applications. Fremont has had four inquiries totaling 729 units. Is this a good development or not? We need to provide housing for moderate income people and buying a condo is one way to get into the market. On the other side, we would be losing rental property which is needed for those who have below moderate income.

Fremont has 64.6% homeownership compared with 56.7% throughout California and 54.7% in Alameda County. Apartment vacancy rates average 4% in the State. Alameda County has a 4% rate for complexes that have less than 99 units and 5% for complexes that have greater than 100 units. Fremont has a 3.4% vacancy rate at the present time.

The median household income in Fremont is \$82,200, which can afford \$2,283/month (using the guide that a family can afford 30% of their income for housing. Rental costs range from \$1250 to 1450 while condos costs are \$3463 and single-family homes can go as high as \$4924 per month. At the present time there are 12,136 apartments in Fremont and approximately 1800 condos.

If the owners of an apartment complex started with a tract map for condominiums, they do not even have to notify the city that they are converting from rental apartments to condos. If the complex was planned and built as apartments, the owners would

need permission from the City (Planning Dept., Planning Commission, etc.)

The existing ordinance for Fremont calls for building and site improvements in order to convert such as the site will conform to applicable city codes for noise transmission standards, smoke detectors, parking, loading and private vehicle access, trash and recycling facilities and a certain amount of storage. It also states that no conversions can be approved if the city-wide vacancy rate is less than 3%. It only requires that the tenant be given relocation information. There is no inclusionary requirement.

Some potential options were explored at the Fremont Council study session on Nov. 15.

- ▶ That there should be fire sprinkler/smoke detector installation, one-hour firewall between units and seismic upgrades.
- ▶ That the vacancy rate be increased and/or
- ▶ That there be a limit on the number of units that can be converted annually.
- ▶ That there be an inclusionary ordinance of 15% or possibly even 20%.
- ▶ That the following kinds of relocation assistance be given; provide 180 day notice to tenants, offer tenants first option to purchase, possibly at a discount, provide relocation assistance (e.g., 2-3 months rent for moving costs) and offer long term lease alternatives for seniors, the handicapped and low income families.

Now that they have the Council's direction, the staff will draft an ordinance and bring it back to Council in the next few months. —Miriam Keller

CALIFORNIA BUDGET PROJECT

The fifth annual policy conference of the California Budget Project (CBP) will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center on March 16, 2006. Panels, speakers, and workshops will explore the theme, "2006 and Beyond: What's Next for California?" As the baby boomers age and our state population grows by over 10 million and becomes even more diverse over the next fifteen years, policy choices will become ever more difficult. Join the CBP in considering those fiscal, demographic, economic and policy challenges; the impact of the federal budget on California; and how to boost public participation in policy debates. A registration form is available at www.cbp.org. Register soon to obtain the early bird rate.

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Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to L.W.V. Ed Fund are deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, or for confidential financial dues assistance, please contact: Marjorie Wakelin: 510-624-4500, marjorie@holyfamilysisters.org

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.

Diversity Policy

LWVFNUC affirms its commitment to reflect the diversity of our communities in our membership and actions. We believe diverse views are important for responsible decision making and seek to work with all people and groups who reflect our community diversity.

LWVFNUC Voter

Published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark and Union City.
 PO Box 3218
 Fremont, CA, 94539
 510-794-5783

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Materials are available 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM with permission of a board member.

LWVUS NEWS

The LWVUS National Convention will be held in Minneapolis, MN, June 10-13, 2006.

If you are interested in attending, see the president for details.

ELECTRONIC CORNER

Members only League sites:

LWVC: <http://lwvc.org/lwvonly> Bookmark this. No user ID or password required. It contains State Board Updates, State Board portfolio or project pages, Board and State Office contacts, League Easy Web, printable publications, State office forms, publication catalog, list of e-mail communication groups.

LWVUS: <http://www.lwv.org> Click on "Members Site". Contains information such as copies of League mailings, Web and Print resources, Convention/Council, Position Updates. Username: lwv, password: cariecatt. After you enter, the id and password will be saved in a cookie so you shouldn't have to enter it again.

LWVUS: State and local leaders section: <http://leaders.lwv.org> Contains specific tools to be used by State and Local Leaders and Board Members. User name: leaders, password: grass-roots.

Election information: Some ballot measure election data (Pros and Cons, In Depth) and registration and voting information are stored on www.ca.lwv.org, but you can also access them from Smart Voter: <http://www.smartvoter.org>

Action on ballot measures: Always go to <http://lwvc.org>. Smart Voter is Voter Service, not advocacy.

—Vesta Wilson





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Fremont, Channel 29, every Wednesday at 7:30 PM
Newark, Channel 6, every Thursday at 7 PM
Union City, Channel 15, every Thursday at 9:30 PM
Hayward, Channel 28, every Monday at 9:30 PM

Visit our website:
<http://www.lwvfnuc.org>
and Smart Voter
www.smartvoter.org

CALENDAR

Fri., Mar. 3	Washington Hospital Study Committee	9:30 AM	Miriam Keller's home
Mon., Mar. 6	Voter Service Meeting	7:30	Miriam Keller's home
Wed., Mar 8	International Women's Day		
Fri., Mar. 10	Education Committee	9:30 AM	Miriam Keller's home
Mar. 13—18	Sunshine Week		
Mon., Mar 13	LWVFNUC Board Meeting	7:15 PM	Joanne Lander's home
Wed., Mar. 15	Cable Taping	2:00	Comcast Studios
Fri., Mar. 17	EdSource Forum	All day	Fremont Marriott
Fri. March 17	Sunshine Forum	All day	San Lorenzo
Wed., Mar.22	Action Committee	9:30 AM	Marilyn Singer's home
Wed., Mar. 29	Reproductive Freedom Day		
April 8 and 9	Fashion Fund Raiser	9:30 AM—3:30 PM	Holly Walter's home