

Memorial Day, May 29



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FREMONT, NEWARK AND UNION CITY  
PRESENTS:



What is desalination?  
 What is done with the water after it is "cleansed"?  
 Will this solve the water problem in California?

To find out, join us in:

**A TOUR OF THE NEWARK DESALINATION FACILITY**  
**6833 Redeker Pl.**  
**Newark**

**Saturday, May 20 at 9:00 AM**

Take Stevenson Blvd. to Newark. Turn right onto Cherry St. Turn left onto Redeker Place. Call  
 Ursel Bloxson if you want to car pool at 656-3501 or cell: 304-2129.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Are you looking forward to summer? I know I am. We have had a busy but productive year and it is time for a vacation. But several items did not get finished this year because there was so much to do. One is our local study of the transparency of the governance of Washington District Hospital. If you have some time to help us with this this summer, please let me know. This committee will meet during the summer. A second item is looking at our New Member Handbook and making revisions. It is such a small project but kept getting to the bottom of our priority list. If you can help, step up and volunteer. I would also appreciate hearing from you about what you liked and didn't like about our activities of this year. The feedback will help us do a better job next year.

At the April meeting, the Board


- ▶ worked on Annual Meeting preparations,
- ▶ voted to submit 4 bylaws changes to the membership,
- ▶ adopted a 2006-7 Budget to present at Annual Meeting,
- ▶ heard that we met the requirements for last year’s Meeting the Challenge,
- ▶ discussed the proposed LWVUS dues increase,
- ▶ decided to send a letter to the Newark Council about a wood smoke ordinance,
- ▶ heard that there is a Community College Initiative and a Patterson Ranch Initiative in circulation that might be on the November ballot,
- ▶ will find a committee to review the New Members Handbook,
- ▶ congratulated John Smith for chairing the Candidate Information Booklet, and
- ▶ reviewed the plans of the Voter Service Committee including an election of the Avalon Homeowners Assn.

**Please contact Syeda Yunus immediately if you can work a half or whole day at the polls or election day evening at the library**

**VOTER SERVICE NEEDS YOUR HELP IN VOTER REGISTRATION**

**Sunday, May 7: 9:00 AM—3:00 PM Safeway, 5877 Jarvis, Newark**  
**Saturday, May 20: 9:00 AM—3:00 PM Half Price Books Paseo Padre Raleys Complex, Fremont**  
**Sunday, May 21: 9:00 AM—3:00 PM—Albertson’s Mission/Warm Springs, Fremont**

No, we are not expected to work all day, but In two hour shifts with a partner. Don't be shy. It is really fun to do. You get to be with a partner that you know, or don't know and can visit or get acquainted. And it is gratifying to register people especially if they are youngsters, brand new voters. Please contact Letha and tell her that you will help. 623-8483 or [letha@lexarmedia.com](mailto:letha@lexarmedia.com)



**ACTION COMMITTEE**


The Action Committee has been assisting Voter Service by writing the questions for the election cable interviews. We planned a Voting Matters program on Propositions 81 and 82 that will run in May to provide information to the public on the two ballot initiatives.

A subcommittee of Action is studying AB 537 so that we can encourage FUSD to add the issue of sexual identity to its diversity policy. Newark and New Haven have already added the wordage to their policies.

Action is studying the initiative that deals with the Patterson Ranch and will have a recommendation for the entire Board soon to decide if the League should support it, oppose it, or remain neutral.

We continue working on environmental issues and health care through our specialists. Our observers continue to watch government in action. They are unsung heroes as they do their jobs quietly.

—Marilyn Singer, Action Chair  
**Here is a song for the observers.**





## California Attorney General Bill Lockyer spoke in San Lorenzo March 17 on the topic of open government.

### Transparency in Government – California Public Records Act & Brown Act

The timely topic of open government was presented by some high-powered individuals last week at a forum in San Lorenzo, hosted by the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Alameda County. California Attorney General Bill Lockyer, Alameda County Counsel Richard Winnie, Berkeley City Attorney Manuela Albuquerque and representatives of several 'watchdog agencies' were among the speakers. The five-hour event was held at the Village Homes Association building on March 17.

The "Sunshine Forum," so-called because it sheds light on government activities, reminded the audience that public records are available not just to the press, but to each and every citizen.

"The answer lies with you out there," said investigative reporter Thomas Peele of the Contra Costa Times. "Your rights are only as important as you make them. We in the press have no more access than anyone else — you just may have to be a pain in the rear end to use those rights. I urge all of you to employ the California Public Records Act and not take 'no' for an answer."

The forum focused on the balance between important competing interests — privacy rights versus public disclosure. Aspects of the Brown Act, which pertains to openness in local governmental meetings, and the California Public Records Act (CPRA) were looked at from a citizens' perspective.

Bonnie Hamlin of the Oakland

LWV introduced the event by stating that such laws are under challenge today.

"At a time when government is becoming more secretive, it is only as good as we the people demand it must be," said Hamlin.

Keynote speaker Bill Lockyer pointed out that for thousands of years in western civilization, information and learning were controlled by a small number of people. These were usually members of the church hierarchy, along with some people in government. With the advent of the printing press, this monopoly on information was fractured.

"I think the reason we got the Bill of Rights was to protect the printing press," said Lockyer, adding that he feels the First Amendment (protecting freedom of the press, assembly, religion, and so on) is "sacred." He also expressed a general anxiety that many people feel about concentration of the media.

"Those who control the 'pipes,' such as cable TV and the Internet and other media, want to control the content. The money is in the content, not in the pipes," says Lockyer. "We see fewer and fewer voices even as we see a proliferation of TV channels."

Lockyer pointed out that pressure from citizens has increased availability of formerly hard-to-get information. He cited 'Megan's Law' as an example. Not long ago, citizens who wanted to check for sex offenders in their neighborhood had to visit a police station for this information. Now it is available online, 24 hours a day.

On the other hand, some requests are unreasonable. Berkeley's Attorney Albuquerque recalled a dog food manufacturer who wanted the names and addresses of all the dog owners in town, to use as a sales tool. That request was denied.

There are many gray areas as well. The California Supreme Court will likely hear several lawsuits on these issues in the near future. They involve release of information on governmental bidding contracts, employment information and salaries of individual public employees, and details on the discipline of law enforcement personnel. The court will have to rule on whether these items are excluded from current 'transparency in government' laws.

County Counsel Winnie pointed out that public law is dynamic. "Openness is a public right. It varies with the public willingness to demand that right," he said.

Attorney Terry Francke, who founded a center for public forum rights in 2004 called Californians Aware, provided a list of "Top 10 Points to Remember" when making a request under the California Public Records Act. These include the following:

Public agencies have the burden of justifying denials by citing the applicable law. Requests need not be in writing, and the requester may remain anonymous except in certain instances (for example, when requesting crime information.) The purpose of the request need not be stated, though the scope of the request must be reasonably clear.

### CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS, MAY 12, COMCAST STUDIOS, AND REBROADCAST TIMES

Union Sanitary District: Jennifer Toy, 1 PM—1:10 PM, Dan Wilkowsky, 1:15 PM—1:25 PM  
 Assembly District 20: Alberto Torrico. 1:30 PM—1:40 PM,  
 Superior Court Judges, Seat 21, begins at 1:50 PM

Rebroadcast: Board of Supervisors, May 12th, 17th, 20th at 8:PM  
 State Senate District 10, Sundays, May 7,14,21, 28 at 8 PM

The law provides that citizens may “inspect” or obtain a copy of records, not demand creation of reports in response to questions. However, if an agency agrees to create such a report, it may charge if the report can’t be produced or constructed without special programming.

Public agencies may charge for photocopies and must provide prompt access when records are clearly public. A 10-day delay mentioned in the Act does not pertain in the case of public records, and is only allowed to resolve good faith doubts as to whether a record is public information. Finally, journalists have the same rights of access

as other people, no more and no less. The full list, as well as similar lists on the Brown Act, censorship, and exemptions to the acts may be found at <http://www.calaware.org/programs/workshops.jsp>

“What I find to be the single most problem in non-compliance is training,” said Dan Purnell, Executive Director of the Oakland Public Ethics Commission. Purnell recommends quarterly training so line staff do not reject legitimate requests nor release private information.

“Cities should think of information from the point of view of citizens,” Purnell added. He recommends having a direc-

tory of frequently and/or predictably requested documents, to save time for both city staff and residents. “The hardest thing for citizens is just finding out where to go for information,” said Berkeley City Clerk Sara Cox.

“Government is so broad spread it’s hard for even people who have been there a while to know.”



### **League Supports Initiative Reform Proposals**

The LWVC Legislation Committee has voted to support two bills that are part of a bipartisan package of initiative reform proposals sponsored by Secretary of State Bruce McPherson. [ACA 18 \(Nation\)](#) would reestablish the indirect initiative in California. It provides for legislative review and possible enactment of initiative proposals, allowing for improvements to be made and costly initiative campaigns to be avoided. [AB 2460 \(Evans\)](#) would require the Secretary of State to check the text printed on initiative petitions prior to circulation for signatures, and on a sample of the completed petitions, to be sure the wording is the same as that originally submitted by proponents. LWVC President Jackie Jacobberger appeared with McPherson and the bills' authors at a press conference to announce support for the proposals. —LWVC

### **Clean Money Bill Advances**

Advocates of Clean Money—public funding of campaigns for state office in California—were rewarded for their efforts when [AB 583 \(Hancock\)](#) was passed by the Assembly on a 47-31 vote on January 30. The bill has been referred to the Senate Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee for a hearing, tentatively scheduled for April 19.

As it moves through the legislative process, the bill will continue to be amended to clarify policy and funding. Among the amendments that are likely to be included soon are provisions that mirror those in an initiative which the California Nurses Association has submitted for signature gathering. These include:

- raising the number of qualifying contributions required for Clean Money candidates
- raising the base funding and maximum matching funds a Clean Money candidate can receive
- providing \$50,000 in public financing for officeholder accounts for legislators elected Clean (\$100,000 for statewide candidates)
- allowing the legislature to pass recommendations made by the Fair Political Practices Commission (after its 10-year review) with a 55 percent vote (instead of two-thirds).

At this time League advocacy is focused on Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata and on the Elections Committee members: Senators Debra Bowen (Chair), Jim Battin (Vice-Chair), Kevin Murray, Charles Poochigian and Gloria Romero. Leagues in those Senators' districts are urged to lobby their representatives and spread the word to friends and colleagues! To be included in the Clean Money action list or for more information, please contact Donna Chipps at [cf@lwvc.org](mailto:cf@lwvc.org). Watch for more action alerts as the bill moves forward. —LWVC

## **VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE—YES ON PROP. 81**

**Strengthens School-Library Partnership to Improve Literacy**

**Local Libraries under-funded, While Need for Library Service Increases**

**Prop 81 Frees up Local Money for Improved Library and Literacy Programs**

**Proposition 81 Is not a tax increase. It puts money into libraries, not administrative overhead**

## LEAGUE NEUTRAL ON PRE-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

At its March meeting, the LWVC board of directors decided that the League will remain neutral on Proposition 82, the Preschool for All Act initiative that will appear on the June ballot. This decision was based on the fact that the LWVC has conflicting positions with regard to the measure. Generally speaking, our PreK-12 Education positions would support the preschool program, but our State and Local Finances positions would not support the way in which it would be financed.

Proposition 82 is both a constitutional amendment and new statutory law. It would add sections to the state Constitution that establish an entitlement to one year of voluntary, free preschool education for all children and create a special fund which could not be used for any purpose other than supporting the preschool program. The tax revenues placed in that fund would not be subject to Proposition 98 or the state appropriations limit. Monies from the fund would be continuously appropriated for the program outside the regular budget process. Administration of the program would be through the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and at the local level through county superintendents or in some cases First Five Commissions.

Statutory provisions of the initiative include a 1.7 percent income tax surcharge on upper income taxpayers imposed for the support of the program. Minimum requirements for operational hours, staffing ratios, and teacher qualification are specified. The proposition provides for a 10-year phase-in period that includes workforce development and the establishment of governance, implementation, and public accountability structures, as well as program/curricular frameworks or state standards that are developmentally appropriate. The Preschool for All Act could be amended only by a two-thirds vote of the legislature or by going back to the ballot.

**LWVC positions:** The LWVC Constitutional position opposes Constitutional provisions which earmark tax funds for specific purposes. Our State and Local Finances (SLF) positions include support for legislative control of, and minimal use of direct voting by citizens on, tax sources and rates. We believe that a fund or tax earmarked for a specific purpose should contain an automatic sunset date and provisions for mandatory government body review and reauthorization, and that earmarked funds and taxes should be adopted only in those situations where social benefit significantly outweighs the loss of flexibility.

The LWVC PreK-12 Education position supports improvements in public education, based on access with both equitable and sufficient opportunities to learn for all students. We believe all children should enter school ready to learn to their fullest potential, and that measures to ensure this include school readiness programs, including universal access to preschools that are high quality, developmentally appropriate, and voluntary.

Our position supports state policies, guidelines, and standards for curriculum that encourage the local districts to develop a broad curriculum, provide for an appropriate range of student abilities and interests, and evaluate feasibility of proposals and effectiveness of curriculum. Other relevant positions include our call for responsibility at the state level for developing guidelines for recruiting, training, certifying, and retraining teachers that maintain high standards and allocating sufficient funds to provide adequate and appropriate salaries for teachers and administrators. We support responsibility at the state level for primary funding of public education, with provision for as much local control as possible over local schools.

Speaking from the SLF policy standpoint, one League analyst says, "We favor giving the legislature the flexibility to set priorities based on changing needs. This measure would set up a

preschool system with its own requirements, governance structure and funding at a time when the demands on the state are forcing hard choices throughout the government. We need to be able to weigh the relative need and effectiveness of various programs and to have the flexibility to change them without going back to the ballot."

On the other hand, a League Education advocate points out that the initiative "goes beyond the 'tinkering around the edges' approach" and that, "More than one research project has demonstrated expanded societal and economic value for each dollar invested in quality preschool education, including reductions in grade retention, use of special education services, high school drop-out and graduation rates, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Universal access to voluntary quality preschool programs can not only address the issue of uneven preparedness of children from different backgrounds, but also helps provide the very ACCESS to the opportunities that are available in the public education system if students are equipped to take advantage of them."

It was these conflicting positions that led the LWVC board to vote to remain neutral on the Proposition 82. It is important to stress that this position of neutrality precludes activity in the name of the League, either in support of or against this initiative.

—LWVC



## THE WORKING PARTY FOR CHILDREN

By Jean Cohen, Chair

The Working Party for Children is a statewide network of League of Women Voters members who are Children and Family Issues activists. The WPC began in 1993 after the LWVC Board of Directors adopted the action policy on Children and Family Issues. This policy is spelled out in detail in the LWVC *Action Policies and Positions* publication.

The WPC supports action on programs and policies that assure basic human needs are met, with an emphasis on children and families and health care for all in California. Our over-arching philosophy is that **all children are entitled to safe and nurturing care; that caring for children is a societal as well as a family responsibility**, and that **programs should be supported that prevent poverty and promote self-sufficiency.**

While a core group of WPC members meets in Los Angeles, usually on the first Wednesday of the month, WPC supporters statewide are linked by e-mail. It is hoped that each local League will have at least one member on this e-list. We track bills, policies and activities in the areas of child care and development, prekindergarten, foster care, child support, domestic violence and child abuse, children's health, juvenile justice, welfare reform and meeting basic human needs.

Some of our members serve as LWVC legislative consultants, recommending measures for League support or opposition. (Those state measures on which

the League takes a stand are listed in the *Bill Status Report* posted on the LWVC Web site.) Additionally, WPC e-mail alerts are occasionally sent out urging action by members as **individuals** on state or federal legislation on which the League has not taken a position. Members are encouraged to make contact with the staff at local offices of their elected officials, keeping them apprised of issues of our interest and concern.

WPC members attend meetings of various organizations, boards and commissions that deal with our issues. The pertinent information exchanged at our regular meetings is sent to all on our e-list. Anyone interested in joining the e-list and receiving WPC minutes and other information is asked to contact Jean F. Cohen, WPC chair, at JCohenLWV@aol.com. Please include the name of your local League as well as your telephone number and e-mail address.



### MAY 7TH WORKSHOP AT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Have you ever thought you were doing all the right things for community outreach and been very disappointed at the outcome? "We gave a great event and nobody came!" Or, "We gave a great event, and the targeted audience didn't come!" For those who want to know how other Leagues in California are successful in community outreach, be it for voter education, programs, or membership events, help is on its way.

The Leadership Council workshop

"H" on Sunday, May 7 is designed to give League leaders practical information on how to attract and retain League members from all dimensions of your community through effective outreach. We will have a panel of leaders from Leagues that have been successful at this outreach and a representative from a community based organization doing voter outreach in the minority community, lots of hand-outs with contacts for various dimensions of your community, and specific "do's and don'ts" for those planning such outreach. We believe that using the League's voter education materials, programs, and membership events is the best way to demonstrate to prospective members that we care about them and their communities and that, by joining us, they can make sure their communities benefit from what we have to offer. Once involved, these folks stay if we continue to exercise good will and give them the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities.

Join me, Bev King, our member services director, and a panel of powerful people for an enjoyable and worthwhile workshop on May 7 at the Leadership Council. Sign up for workshop "H" today

### REDISTRICTING LEGISLATION ADVANCES

[SCA 3 \(Lowenthal\)](#), which would vest the power to redistrict in an independent redistricting commission, was passed out of the Senate Elections Committee on March 15. It contains a major amendment backed by the League; the independent redistricting commission would be 11 in number rather than the five originally proposed. The League, along with its partners, continues to work with Senator Lowenthal to improve the legislation and gather support from a broad constituency as it moves through the state Senate and into the Assembly. Please refer to the [January Government UPDATE](#) for more background on this high-priority issue.

**It's easy to JOIN the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**Any person, man or woman, who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League may join. To be a voting member, one must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen**

Annual dues includes membership in Local, Bay Area, California and National Leagues.  
Make your check payable to: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS and mail it with this form to:

**LWVFNUC-MEMBERSHIP, P.O. Box 3218, Fremont, CA, 94539**



\_\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership - \$50    \_\_\_\_\_ Household - \$75  
Donate to LWVNUC \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Donate to Ed. Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
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from \_\_\_\_\_

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@holysisters.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.

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4368 Enterprise St., off Grimmer, near  
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Materials are available 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM with  
permission of a board member.

**ELECTRONIC CORNER**

A wonderful resource is near at hand.  
For information on candidates and  
issues, go to Smart Voter  
[www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)



You can view your ballot and find  
your polling place. You can register  
to vote. You can read statements by candidates and find links to  
other resources. You can find information about local elections for  
your county. Please spread the word.

An effective method for spreading the word fast about Smart Voter is  
viral marketing. Send a short e-mail about Smart Voter to friends and  
relatives. A sample e-mail is available on the Smart Voter Web site  
under "Tell a Friend" (left column) at:

<http://smartvoter.org/voter/email.html>.

—Vesta Wilson



**QUOTE:** The only freedom that deserves the name is that  
of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do  
not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their ef-  
forts to obtain it.—John Stuart Mill



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**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF FREMONT,  
NEWARK AND UNION CITY**  
P.O. Box 3218 Fremont, CA, 94539  
(510) 794-5783

**WATCH VOTING MATTERS**

Tune in to see Judy Zlatnik interview Maryann Snyder and Michael Leshy . Topic: pro/con for Proposition 82.  
**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](http://www.smartvoter.org)

**CALENDAR**

Sat. and Sun., May 6 and7	Leadership Council	All day	Sacramento
Mon., May 8	League Lobby Day	All day	Sacramento
Mon., May 8	LWVFNUC Board Meeting	7:15 PM	Joanne Lander's home
Mon., May 12	Education Committee Meeting	9:30 AM	Miriam Keller's home
Fri., May 12	Candidate Forums	1: 00 PM—2:45 PM	Comcast Studios
Sat., May 13	Bay Area League Convention	All day	SF Bay Model, Sausalito
Wed., May 17	Cable Taping	2:00 PM	Comcast Studios
Sat., May 20	Tour: Desalination Plant	9:00 AM	Newark
Wed., May 24	Action Committee	9:30 AM	Marilyn Singer's home
	Annual Meeting		