

# Voter

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



## ANNUAL REPORTS

### PRESIDENT' REPORT

Housewives, househusbands and League of Women Voters can be identified by the old adage—"Women's work is never done". 2005-2006 was another one of those years.

Whether it was Voter Service and elections or educating ourselves about issues, we were constantly busy. (See Voter Service V.P. and Program V.P. reports In this issue.)

We "Met the Challenge". One of only 5 Leagues in the state to do so. Our membership on record with LWVUS as of Jan. 31 was 129. To meet the challenge a League had to increase membership by 5% and we did it. The full report on this is to be found in the "Call to Annual Meeting" on page 6. We will try it again this coming year. The really hard part, though, will be getting all those new members. Don't you have a friend whom you need to ask to join the League?

Our Action Committee did a great deal of work this year as you will find when you read the Action Committee report. Members of the Education Committee tried to keep themselves informed of education issues, whether in the State legislature or in our local districts.

We participated in the LWVC regional workshops, the LWVC Energy Study & Consensus and the LWVC Leadership Council in May. We attended the Bay Area League's Days in September, January and May. We have a member Susan Gearhart on the Bay Area Natural Resources/Water Committee.

We joined with the Alameda County Council of Leagues on a study of the Alameda Office of Education and the Superintendent, and whether that office should be an appointed or an elected one. The Council has also been watching the Alameda County Medical Center and one of our members, Ken Ballard was appointed to the Oversight Committee for Measure A (the ½ cent sales tax increase with the proceeds to go to the Alameda County Medical Center.) The County Council also received a \$1000 grant from LWVUS to put on a forum about Transparency in Government for Sunshine Week last March. Attorney General Bill Lockyer was the keynote speaker.

We have published our local Voter 10 times this year and have tried to incorporate an article from the Bay Area Monitor in each of our Voters and also many articles of interest from Ed-Source. The Voter is available on the LWVFNUC web site. We have a very informative Web site with useful information for the public plus internal information on a member only board web site. It is kept up to date by our web master Peter Starr and his helper Jack Keller.

We have observers watching many of our local agencies, although we can always use more eyes and ears. Last year we monitored the Fremont City Council and School Board, Ohlone College Board, the Union Sanitary District and East Bay Regional Parks. Also Muriel Nolan was appointed to the Fremont Integrated Waste Management

Committee, Robert Monkman sits on the Library Advisory Committee and the Fremont Unified School District Health & Safety Bond Oversight Committee. Pat Danielson is a member of the Ohlone Bond Oversight Committee.

Administrative V.P. was shared by 3 people this term in order to handle the League mail, telephone calls, and mail the Voter, projects thought up by the president and the Board, and fundraising. Fundraising projects this year included the Garage Sale led by Holly Bell Walters and Alison Kieft, two Weekenders, working at the polls, recycling used computer ink cartridges, and grocery store escrip. We hope to monitor some Homeowners Associations next year.

The Membership Committee must have done something right this year because we made a 5% gain in members. Sister Marjorie Wakelin did the regular membership activities and Sam Neeman produced the Member Directory and Information Handbook.

—Miriam Keller



## ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

You have charged your Action Committee with the job of seeing that the League has an active voice in the affairs of our communities and government bodies. But everyone in the League can be part of the "action" as you share your informed opinions with elected officials and also with your friends. We need all of you to be our arms and legs and voices so League can make a difference.

Your Action Committee members are: Miriam Keller, Alex Starr, Susan Gearhart, Kay Emanuele, Sam Neeman, Muriel Nolan, Syeda Yunus, Ursel Bloxsom, Ken Ballard, Jean Holmes, and Marilyn Singer. We could use a few more people to help us, and hope you will join us.

We operate in many ways. We watch public meetings and websites and encourage open government. We write and deliver testimony that is supported by League Positions, and we use Vertical Positions (parts of LWVUS and LWVC positions that the local Leagues can use) to do it. We educate ourselves, the membership and the public on issues of community interest.

One of the parts of the Committee is the Observer Corps. Observers watch public meetings and report back to us if any action is out of the ordinary or needs attention. Observers do not speak at meetings, but they exert League pressure by just being there wearing their League Buttons. Being an observer is something a quiet person can do very effectively, so if that sounds like something you could do, please tell us. Currently our observers are: Julie Winter at EBRPD, Ellen Culver at USD, Betty Foster at UC Council, Pat Lewis at Washington Hospital, Mary Roulet at Fremont Council, Vesta Wilson at FUSD, and Joanne Landers at Ohlone.



Action Committee plans and the Cable Crew produces our monthly program called "Voting Matters" on cable channel 29. Miriam Keller is the acting producer of the program, John Smith is the director, and the cable crew is: Alex Starr, Vesta Wilson, Kay Emanuele, Ursel Bloxsom, and Miriam Keller. We need more people on this crew and will train members who would like to learn how to work the cameras or the boards. The taping is on the third Wednesday of each month at 3 PM. To all the researchers, guests, writers and moderators, thank you. The program schedule for this year was as follows:

August- Not In My Town

September-Sustainability

October- League Positions on Ballot Issues

November- Fremont's 50th Anniversary

January- Fremont's Finances

February- SB 861- Sheila Kuehl's single payer health bill

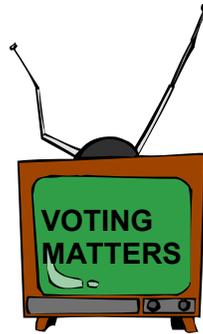
March-

April- Interview with Interim Registrar of Voters, Elaine Ginnold

May- Propositions 81 & 82 on June ballot

June- Don Dillon's historic photos of Fremont's first 25 years

July- Green Construction



We assisted Voter Service by writing questions for election interviews and forums and by composing the questions for our Smart Voter website.

We have a new way of structuring the Action Committee. Each member of the committee has agreed to be a "Specialist" on an aspect of our work, and this makes our job more organized and builds up expertise on the various issues. This is the team and some of the issues they are responsible for handling:

Housing (Miriam Keller)- Works on affordable housing, the housing elements of the three cities, condo conversion and exclusionary ordinances

Transportation (Alex Starr) - Follows the intermodal station in UC, watches BART and AC Transit issues, and monitors Dumbarton Rail.

Redistricting (Kay Emanuele)- Reads and watches legislation

Document Preparation (Sam Newman)- Edits and prepares written materials for the committee. Is planning a new electronic documentation system for League.

Legislative Interviews (Muriel Nolan)- Conducts and writes up State Interviews.

Environment (Susan Gearhart) Works with Action on Hatch Hetchy and other water issues and monitors local issues like Patterson Ranch. Susan has the Board job of Environmental Director. See her separate report on Environmental Issues.

Health Issues (Syeda Yunus)- Educates us on health issues and currently is working on SB 861, single payer.

Finance Issues (Jean Holmes) : Follows State and Local finances and provides information as needed..

In addition, Kay Emanuele has been our liaison with "Not In Fremont" She, Alex and Marilyn are currently working with them to implement SB 537 that mandates the inclusion of "sexual orientation and perceived sexual orientation" to the list of diversities protected from harassment in the local school districts. Kay also served on Fremont's 50th Anniversary Committee for the League working in the area of education.

We have interviewed the following people during the year to gain information: John Dutra on water and transportation issues; members of "Friends of Coyote Hills Fremont" and Gus Morrison on the Initiative on Patterson Ranch; Paul Piraino on water issues; John Weed on BAWSCA ( Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency); Art Jensen on BAWSCA; Ana Apodaca on Newark city issues.

We could write a book on everything we try to do, but there would be too many chapters. You can see that what we do is interesting, and also that we could use more help. Contact me at singer756@sbcglobal.net if you want to come to a meeting to see if you like it. We will not tie you to a chair if you come, but we will welcome you. Meetings, of course, are always open to the membership to observe.

—Marilyn Singer, Chair  
Action Committee.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee followed the developments of the Exit Exam. We studied budget concerns and universal student identifiers. We looked at high school catalogues to determine if all high schools offered the same opportunities to students. We studied proposition 49, The After School Education and Safety Program. We looked at alternatives for those students who did not pass the exit exam. We discussed proposition 82, "Pre-school for All". Three members attended the EdSource Conference in March. We received and read the monthly EdSource reports. Most months, we made a report to be included in the Voter. Committee members are: Miriam Keller, Ken Ballard, Ann Crosbie and Vesta Wilson. Chair, Education Committee

—Vesta Wilson



### **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIRECTOR**

This position was offered to me to direct the Energy Study facing us in 2006. I have had the opportunity to provide the primary purpose of my position and that was to complete the Energy Update Study. The Delegates to the 2003 convention of the League of Women Voters of California voted to undertake a study to update the LWVC position on Energy. As the discussion Leader and Moderator we submitted the entire study to the LWVC on February 14, 2006 as completed and approved by the LWVFNUC Board on February 13, 2006. We had 25 participants including Jane Turnbill as our keynote speaker. It was a learning experience for all. However, now we need to re-evaluate the need for a Environment Director/specialist.

In the following year, I have followed and/or recommended action on:

**Alameda Creek Alliance** representing the largest creek which goes through all three of our cities, Fremont, Newark and Union City. On June 10, 2005, our League wrote a letter to the LWVBA Natural Resources/Water Board requesting the Executive Committee to ask the SFPUC to begin complying with the California fish and Game (CDF&G) code 5937 and the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the SFPUC and the CDFG in 1997. The purpose was to commit to the release of sufficient interim summer flows from Calaveras and possibly San Antonio reservoirs immediately to sustain resident steelhead and rainbow trout in good condition. Our local League took the lead. The LWVBA wrote a letter in complete support of this issue.

**Development of Patterson Ranch** had submitted an application for a Development Agreement without specific plans. Now, in July, 2005, there are plans to be reviewed by all interested parties. The City Council has stated it is not in a hurry to respond. The area is important because of the environmental qualities of the land. It was approved in Action Committee in July, 2005 that I and a small Ad Hoc committee review the development from the position of "what lands needs to be protected" and I have submitted my report. An Initiative to protect the land from development has been submitted to the city of Fremont for approval on the 2006 ballot. At this time the Action Committee is developing a White Paper.

**Bay Area Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)** This union of government and private enterprise has responsibility for the regional issue of the San Francisco Bay Area in which our League is part. Following EIRs of possible developing projects along with establishing goals has been very informative. My first meeting was July 21, 2005. Since then the **Bay Area Water Forum** has been created and it relates to wetlands not under tidal influence but paramount to save.

**South Bay Salt Pond Restoration (SPSP)** has geographically more importance to us locally. The restoration of the tidal wetlands only is the intention of this Coastal Conservancy along with the Federal Fish and Wildlife and the State Fish and Game. EIRs have been produced for areas of project work and more intensive wetlands restoration will begin this year, 2006. **Coyote Creek** gathers water from the Toroges Creek in the south, (including all creeks from the watershed basin of the hills), to Morrison Canyon Creek in the north. Fremont alone delivers runoff water to this impaired body of water as documented by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Board. Coyote Creek collects all the ditches and lines as they travel south and across the freeway from NUMMI, dumps the toxins into Coyote River and finally into Mudd Slough. This is an area of concern to us and a topic for SBSP. We need to continue to watch.

**Hetch Hetchy Water System Improvement Project (WSIP)** by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has become a large focus for our League. First in September of 2005, we wrote a letter to LWVBA to have this item be a topic for our "Bay Area Day". It has also become "An Issue for Emphasis" by the LWVBA. The first program will be on September 16, 2006 so save that day. The Action Committee has interviewed Paul Piriano with ACWD, John Weed, our elected official on the ACWD board, John Dutra concerning the legislative audit findings that demanded a seismic retrofitting of the Hetch Hetchy system along with adding larger water capacity for times of drought. Presently, the project is behind schedule with only two quarterly reports to the Legislative Audit Commission and over \$4B recommended for projected costs. This is certainly something that Bay Area Water Conservation and Supply Agency (BAWSCA) representing the 28 Water Districts is following closely with

SFPUC because it will affect all of us, We will follow it closely, too.

I've reported on other items such as the: **Sunol Dump**: If we get an easterly breeze the 600 tons of daily composting will be our aroma from Sunol.

**Global Warming**: Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" concerning global warming a must see.

**Biological Diversity** as well as LWVC has kept me aware of **ALERTS**

**Measure T** was passed completely in October of 2005! The delay of almost three years due to many changes in staff, the City Manager and at all levels of the Fremont Planning Department. Then a year's delay as a Consultant was hired to check the City of Fremont's Toe of the Hill (TOH) and they roughly came up with the same line but added pockets and projections which confused everyone. However, it was adopted and sealed!!! Now we are following how to hold the developer to being accurate with the 30% of grade. Since the 1981 Initiative there were many projects that were submitted above the TOH and above the 30% constrained land that were allowed to be developed. This must be corrected if the citizen's votes are taken seriously in both 1981 and in 2002. The LWV has been a substantial and successful supporter of the Hill Area Initiative.

Personally the addition of being on the Board of our local LWV and on the Bay Area LWV in the Natural Resource/Water has helped me profoundly in understanding the region in which we live. Regional transportation, air quality, land use, housing and water quality are issues that affect us locally but need the regional support and vision. I have learned so much in a year and I thank the LWV in opening doors for me to learn and grow in my understanding of these issues.

—Susan Gearhart



**PROGRAM VICE-PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

We have had an interesting year looking at these different issues.

September: Civil Liberties: Balancing Liberty and Security

October: Discussion of the November Ballot Propositions

November: Health Care for Whom?

December: Holiday Party and National Program Planning

January: Energy Study Consensus

February: Grade the News

March: Sunshine Week and EdSource Conference

April: Brown Act Forum (Shine a Light on Government)

May: A Tour of the Newark Desalination Facility

June: Annual Meeting. Speaker, Dr. Douglas Treadway

—Ursel Bloxson and Ken Ballard,  
co-Program Vice Presidents

**VOTER SERVICE VICE PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

Our members keep 57 voter registration boxes filled all year round plus one in every Fremont elementary school. Almost 10,000 affidavits were distributed. We held 3 registration drives. We distributed 5000 LWVC pros and cons. 800 English, Spanish and Chinese Easy Voter guides were distributed. We arranged a candidate forum for County Supervisor, and one for State Senate District #10. We used an interview format for the Union Sanitary District because the two incumbents were not running against each other. We interviewed 5 candidates for the Superior Court Judge, Seat #21. All of these were taped at the Comcast Studios and rebroadcast on 2 weekends before the election.

Letters of contact were sent to all candidates requesting their participation in the forums and instructing them in the use of LWV web site for Smart Voter. Many people helped with the forums by serving at moderators, timekeepers and question sorters.

—Letha Saldahna  
— Ellen Culver

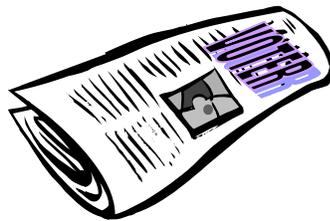
Co-Vice Presidents, Voter Service



**VOTER REPORT:**

The Voter was published 10 times. All issues contained a President's Message, Board Briefs, news and events of our League, news of other Leagues or events of interest to our League, a mission statement, a non-partisan statement, committee reports, an invitation to join the League and a calendar. Some issues contained a thank you to our sponsors, notebook pages on current issues, welcome to new members, upcoming local, regional, state and national League events and corrections to our roster. One issue contained the "Call to the Annual Meeting. The Voter is on our website.

—Vesta Wilson, Voter Editor



**FUNDRAISING**

We did the following activities for fundraising:

1. A garage sale, Fall 2005
2. Two Weekenders, Fall 2005, Spring, 2005
3. We continue escrow and we have some recycling of old cartridges
4. At Kickoff 2005, we sold some products, under \$20.00
5. We agreed to do election monitoring for a home owners association. We plan to develop this more in the coming year

—Syeda Yunus  
Development Chair



**END OF ANNUAL REPORTS**

*New Regional Park on the Vargas Plateau!*

The East Bay Regional Park District is starting the planning process for a new, 1,000-acre regional park in Fremont, called Vargas Plateau Regional Park. The Park District will prepare a "Land Use Plan" to set a long-term vision for recreational facilities and resource management.

Vargas Plateau Regional Park is set high in the Fremont hills next to Niles Canyon. The park is an attractive setting for outdoor recreation, which could include activities like hiking, camping, picnicking and others. The Bay Area Ridge Trail will also traverse the park. The scenic grasslands and woodlands are valuable wildlife habitat. Careful park planning and ongoing management will provide for public use and enjoyment while preserving this habitat.

Cattle are grazed on the hillsides to manage the park's grasslands, continuing a tradition from the early days of Mission San Jose. A long history of family ranching and farming on Vargas Plateau has kept intact the pastoral beauty that we enjoy today. Vargas Plateau lands have been protected from development by the citizens of Fremont for your use.

—Susan R. Gearhart

**REDISTRICTING POLL RELEASED**

The League of Women Voters of California, in partnership with California Common Cause and the Rose Institute of State and Local Government and with partial funding from the James Irvine Foundation, commissioned a public opinion poll to test California voters' attitudes towards redistricting reform. The poll of 800 likely voters was taken April 18-23 and showed strong support for an independent redistricting commission as well as a very highly favorable public view of the League.

The preference for an independent commission was seen across parties, regions, and races, and even among those who voted "No" on Proposition 77 last November. Asked about the standards that should be used when a commission draws district lines, voters strongly favored an open process with proposed maps circulated in public hearings and on the Internet. They also felt deeply that neighborhoods and cities should be kept together and not divided between districts. A PowerPoint summary of the survey results can be found on the LWVC Web site:

[www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/](http://www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/)

## LWV ALAMEDA COUNTY COUNCIL SUPERINTENDENT STUDY READY FOR LOCAL LEAGUE REVIEW

In December 2004, the LVACC authorized a restudy of its 1996 position on the Alameda County Office of Education and the Alameda County Board of Education. The restudy was based on the LWVC position, entitled Intergovernmental Relationship which states, "Support an efficient, effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority among the levels of government with accountability to the public."

A study committee was appointed with a representative of each of the seven Leagues in Alameda County and it has met monthly since its inception. The committee focused on, "The Efficacy of Elected vs. Appointed County Superintendent of Schools." This issue came up during the original 1996 study, but was not included in the final position.

In 53 of the 58 counties, both the County Board of Education and the County Superintendent are elected. The five counties with appointed Superintendents are: Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Ventura.

County Boards of Education, under Education Code provisions, are responsible for: setting the superintendent's salary; approving the county budget; hearing appeals on expulsions and suspensions from districts; and acting as a school board for the Juvenile Court School and other community day schools operated by the county. When a County Superintendent is elected, the County Board does not have the authority to evaluate the elected superintendent's performance, establish work goals, or change the budget, unless both parties agree to such an arrangement.

County Superintendents are responsible for: Hiring and firing of staff members; developing and presenting the county budget; operating the Juvenile Court and other county schools; ensuring the fiscal viability of the school districts in the county; and providing other services to districts if mandated or needed. Recently, County Offices have been given additional responsibilities such as reviewing and monitoring school districts under provisions of the Williams law suit settlement.

A team of two members from the LWVACC study committee are prepared to assist local Leagues in studying this issue and reach consensus on questions listed below. The committee will then compile the results of those meetings and prepare an updated position which local Leagues can present at their next Program Planning meeting. Questions? Contact Lynn Groh [lynnandjim-groh@earthlink.net](mailto:lynnandjim-groh@earthlink.net) or Eleanor Parker [eliparker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eliparker@sbcglobal.net) who co-chair the committee.

### CONSENSUS QUESTIONS FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT STUDY UPDATE

1. Which method—elected or appointed County Superintendent of Schools (CSS)—would improve the effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority between the County Superintendent and the County Board of Education? Why?
2. Which method—elected or appointed CSS—would improve accountability to the public? To the County Board?
3. Which method is a less expensive way to implement?
4. How would an appointed CSS affect the responsibilities and authority of the County Board of Education and would that be positive or negative?
5. Should the results of this study be used to support a statewide change in the method of selecting a CSS? Please explain.

### Challenges of Our Interdependent Water System Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006:

Come learn about the politics of our water supply and the safety and security of our water systems, with a special look at the Hetch Hetchy upgrades now under way.

#### The Program:

- The Bay Area Economy and Water
  - The San Francisco Hetch Hetchy Water System, the Water Supply Improvement Program – an Overview
  - Challenges of Retail Water Agency's Emergency Water Plans
  - Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency: Keeping the Water System Improvement Program on Schedule
- Challenges of Our Water System: Promoting Water Conservation

Come enjoy a day in San Francisco and learn about one of our most essential resources.

- Marines' Memorial Club, 609 Sutter Street, SF, CA 94102
- [www.marineclub.com](http://www.marineclub.com) for more site information, in the Crystal Ballroom
- **Reservation are required**-cost is \$17.50
- Program starts at 9:00 am for continental Breakfast and Coffee/Tea

Adjournment: 1:00 pm

\*For reservations please email Treasurer of LWVBA Tam Hege, [tamhege@aol.com](mailto:tamhege@aol.com) or send a check to: Tam Hege, 80 Florada Ave., Piedmont, CA 94610. Reservations by 9/1/06

## LEGACY POLLUTANTS IN THE BAY

Water moving from inland rivers through the Delta to the Bay brings with it the history of where it has been, from nutrient-rich marshes to polluted drainages. Over time, some of that history has settled into the bottom sediments and edges of the Bay in the form of contamination, also known as "legacy" pollution. The contamination may be from pesticides and other chemical compounds or from heavy metals. When guidelines are developed to keep the Bay water clean enough for a healthy ecology, these legacy contaminants must be considered as part of the picture.

As part of an ongoing series of regulatory decisions aimed at controlling Bay water quality, several regional agencies are currently considering legacy contaminants. The San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is revising the mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement for the Bay, in response to direction from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). This will also involve amendments to the Basin Plan, which will be considered at hearings on June 14 and August 9, 2006. The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has scheduled a June 15 hearing on an amendment to the San Francisco Bay Plan regarding legacy contaminants.

A proposed water quality attainment strategy to address legacy pesticides in the Bay is also being formulated. Much of this effort is being undertaken by the Clean Estuary Partnership (CEP), a collaboration that includes the RWQCB, the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies, and the Bay Area Storm water Management Agencies Association, together with other participants such as the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Port of Oakland. According to a fact sheet produced by the CEP, the primary legacy pollutants in the Bay are the banned pesticide DDT, the banned chlorine compounds called PCBs, and mercury. Other pollutants in the Bay that have some legacy sources include copper, selenium, dioxins and furans, and the banned pesticides chlordane and dieldrin. Contamination from banned substances continues to occur because currents, dredging, and recycling through the food chain naturally stir up the water and sediments of the Bay and move the pollution around. DDT and PCBs are persistent compounds; they do not break down easily and they accumulate in living organisms. Soils contaminated with these substances continue to wash into the Bay, especially during winter storms, adding to pollutant levels.

An accurate assessment of legacy contamination is essential before realistic regulations can be established and enforced, and may help to determine the best strategy to reduce the total impact of legacy pollutants on the Bay. Since 1993, the Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) of the San Francisco Estuary Institute has contributed scientific research on the Bay to support regulatory and other programs that contribute to the health of the Bay. A recent RMP report indicates that levels of legacy pesticides, specifically DDT, chlordanes and dieldrin, have been declining over the period from 1980 to the present, although the rate of the decline has become more gradual since 1990.

However, the decline in legacy pesticides is still more pronounced than the decline in other banned contaminants such as PCBs. According to the RMP Fall 2004 Report, "if there were zero input of PCBs to the Estuary it would take approximately 80 years for internal PCB concentrations to decline to levels where all Estuary caught fish were safe to eat." Continued contributions of PCBs from Central Valley rivers could make it impossible to reach a safe level in any foreseeable future.

The majority of mercury contamination in the Bay is due to the use of mercury in gold mining in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Huge quantities of mercury were washed into the Bay from mines in the Sierra. Much of the mercury came from mines in the Bay Area, such as the New Almaden Mine in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and although these mines are closed, runoff from them continues to make its way into the region's watershed and into the Bay. The RWQCB plans additional evaluation of mine sites and cleanup sites along the margin of the Bay to reduce these sources of mercury pollution.

In addition to legacy sources, urban sources such as storm water runoff, treated wastewater and air pollution from burning fossil fuels contribute additional mercury on a daily basis. In February 2006, the California Water and Air Boards held a joint meeting to consider air pollutants, such as mercury, that are transferred to water either directly or in runoff from areas affected by air pollution.

Concerns regarding mercury cited by the State Water Board included assessment of the contributions of dredging and legacy sources to mercury levels in the Bay, the need to implement the most effective pollution prevention practices and treatment technologies, reducing the public health impact of consuming mercury contaminated fish, and determining whether the TMDL will attain the water quality objectives and adequately protect birds and wildlife.

Addressing these concerns requires balancing adequate protection of health and the environment against the need to acknowledge that current dischargers are not responsible for legacy contamination. However, as legacy pollution is broken down or otherwise removed from the Bay, and tighter regulations restrict newer pollution sources, the overall impact of legacy pollutants will diminish, improving the health of the Bay.

—Leslie Stewart, Bay Area Monitor

## **NEXT TEN PROJECT UPDATED AND EXPANDED**

A number of Leagues around the state have been using the Next Ten Budget Challenge game to educate themselves and the public about state budget and fiscal policy. Next Ten reports that they have updated the game, adding several new policy choices and enhanced user-friendly graphics, and are now looking out five years to help players better understand the choices we face and how they affect the long-term budget.

New policy options include a choice to dedicate new income tax revenues to either balance the budget or fund preschool and an option to levy a cigarette tax.

The Challenge gives one the option to fund or suspend funding the budget reserve, the option to pre-pay retiree health benefits, and the option to change state college tuition levels. This update explores the impacts of investing in infrastructure by giving the option to increase transportation spending and revenues. Check it out at [www.nextten.org](http://www.nextten.org).

Next Ten has started work on developing an infrastructure program similar to their efforts on the state budget. To help assemble a strategy, they have partnered with the Panetta Institute to convene a group of infrastructure experts from across the state in dialogue. (Materials from the expert panelists are available at [www.nextten.org/infrastructuredocs.php](http://www.nextten.org/infrastructuredocs.php).) One of their first infrastructure products will be an infrastructure brochure, which will explain basic infrastructure principles and should be valuable for all Californians--especially in understanding the different choices we have.

## **NOVEMBER 2006 GENERAL ELECTION**

It now looks as if there could be 13 or more statewide propositions on the ballot for the November general election. The LWVC board has not yet taken any positions on the propositions but will likely do so at the board's July meeting.

The first five measures were placed on the ballot by the legislature and Governor as the infrastructure package agreed upon in early May. Proposition 1A is a constitutional amendment to make it more difficult to use Proposition 42 transportation funds for non-transportation purposes. Propositions 1B through 1E are bond measures to provide \$19.9 billion in funds for highway safety, traffic reduction, air quality, and port security; \$2.8 billion for housing and emergency shelter and for capital improvements related to infill; \$10.4 billion for kindergarten through university educational facilities; and \$4.1 billion for levee repairs and other flood control infrastructure.

In addition to these ballot items, it is likely that the November ballot will include initiatives on all or most of the following issues: restrictions on and punishment for sex offenders; parental notification before a minor's abortion; restrictions on use of eminent domain to take or limit use of private property; campaign financing (Clean Money, funded by a tax on corporate income, and other campaign financing restrictions); a property parcel tax for funding kindergarten through 12th grade education; a tax on California oil extraction to reduce consumption and fund research on alternative energy; a tax on cigarettes to provide funding for hospitals for emergency services, nursing education and health insurance to eligible children and to fund tobacco prevention and various disease control programs; and a \$5.4 billion bond issue for water quality, safety and supply, flood control, natural resource protection, and park improvements.

The legislature may still place other measures on the ballot, among them the League-supported constitutional amendment to establish an independent redistricting commission.

An *Action Guide* will be developed for those ballot measures on which the LWVC board takes a position so that local Leagues can take action.

## **VOTING RIGHTS ACT RENEWAL ADVANCES**

The LWVUS is leading League efforts to renew the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) intact. H.R. 9, the bill reauthorizing portions of the VRA that are due to expire in 2007, has been passed by the House Judiciary Committee and is headed for a vote on the House floor. These essential provisions protect minority voters from discrimination, assist citizens who are not native English speakers in casting informed ballots, and provide for federal election observers. All Leagues in California have been asked to contact their congressional representatives and urge them to support H.R. 9 without amendments. A [fact sheet on the Voting Rights Act in California](#) is attached and is very useful for VOTERS and handouts when Leagues are working on this issue. Leagues should continue to be alert to respond to LWVUS Action Alerts through the summer.

**ATTENTION TO ALL ON LINE FOLKS: People have changed e-mail addresses and some new members are not on the e-tree. If you are not receiving e-tree messages, please send an e-mail to [jojovest@aol.com](mailto:jojovest@aol.com) with "subscribe" in the message area. Your e-tree thanks you.**

## HOME FREE: FREE ALL-DAY FREE TRANSIT TO FIGHT SMOG

As the centerpiece of the 2006 Spare the Air program, the Free Fare Campaign is intended to get people in the Bay Area out of their cars and onto transit on potentially smoggy days, thereby avoiding excesses of state and federal ozone standards. The Free Fare Campaign should also help build greater transit ridership and increase public awareness of the Spare the Air program and the regional agencies that implement it.

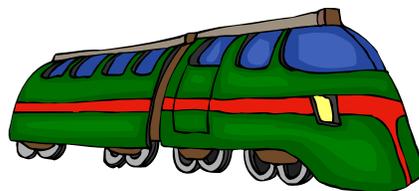
This year, the Spare the Air program begins on Thursday, June 1, and runs through Friday, October 13. During this time, on the first three non-holiday Spare the Air weekdays—when the ozone level is predicted to exceed state and federal standards—23 of the Bay Area's 26 transit operators will offer free rides from the start of service in the morning to the end of service. This unique, award-winning campaign is the result of a partnership among the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the participating transit operators.

The Air District and MTC have committed \$7.6 million of federal Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvements Program (CMAQ) and regional Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) funds toward the 2006 Spare the Air/Free Fare Program. Of this, \$6.3 million will be used to reimburse the participating transit operators for fare recovery on Free Fare days. The Air District, MTC, and the transit operators agreed to ground rules to be followed by the transit operators. Each operator must prepare an action plan containing at a minimum the training of employees on their duties when a Spare the Air advisory is called, how to accommodate a potential 10 percent increase in ridership, marketing and outreach activities, communications protocol, and accounting procedures used for fare reimbursement. The operator must also prepare a ridership monitoring and evaluation plan for the collection, analysis, and reporting of data on Free Fare days and a baseline day.

The Employer Outreach Program has now registered more than 1,900 employers and, through them, more than more than 935,000 employees. The employers provide their employees with information from the Air District on the Spare the Air program and notify them of AirAlerts.

To promote the widest media coverage and get the public's attention, the Air District launched the 2006 Spare the Air program by co-sponsoring the A's-Giants baseball game on May 21 at McAfee Coliseum in Oakland. The Air District, MTC, and the transit operators also participated in the Campaign press conference in late May at Treasure Island.

New, bold graphics have been created for the Free Fare campaign to be used on four outdoor billboards, on signs on buses and in BART stations, and on wrapped buses. A banner will be displayed on Treasure Island during June and July. New radio and television spots have been



—Adelia Sabiston.  
Bay Area Monitor, June/July

### 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) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_    New Member \_\_\_\_\_    Renewal \_\_\_\_\_    Transfer \_\_\_\_\_  
 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@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

President: Miriam Keller  
 Treasurer: Bunny Robinson  
 Editor: Vesta Wilson  
 Office Hours:

The LWVFNUC storage office address is:  
 4368 Enterprise St., off Grimmer, near Automall.

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

### ELECTRONIC CORNER

There are 13 propositions on the November, 2006 ballot..  
 For information go to:

<http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/>

This is the website of California Secretary of State, Bruce McPherson.

On this site you are able to peruse election results and election dates, voter registration statistics, voter information, initiatives, voter education, political parties, candidate information, county elections officials, among others.

Do a few clicks and you are able to find a list of the propositions along with their sponsors.

Smart Voter will have ballot measure information on its website by mid-September.

—Vesta Wilson



**QUOTE:** I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, December 10, 1964*



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

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit # 445

### WATCH VOTING MATTERS

Tune in to see Kay Emanuele interview Union City Student Representative, Candice Nguyen.

**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

Mon., Aug 21	LWVFNUC BOARD	7:15	Marilyn Singer's home
Wed., Aug 23	Action Committee	9:30	Marilyn Singer's home
Wed., Aug. 23	Cable Taping	2:00	Comcast Studios
Fri., Sept. 14	Education Committee	9:30	Miriam Keller's home
Sat., Sept. 16	Challenge of Our Interdependent Water Systems	9:00— 1:00	San Francisco
Mon., Sept 18	Unit Meeting	TBA	TBA