

BAY AREA

VOTER

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

March 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Barbara Murray

Bay Area League's Financial Status: The economic news for the last several months has been full of doom and gloom. However, I am very happy to report that the Bay Area League is on **sound** financial footing. This is due in part to the generosity of our members in making monetary donations in addition to dues and in-kind contributions. We continue to be supported by companies and businesses in our community. I also want to single out Shell Deer Park for again underwriting the publication costs of the *Bay Area Guide to Elected Officials*. A new source of income has come from an ExxonMobil volunteer grant program available for company employees/spouses. The League Board has also worked hard to monitor and budget our resources. We have reduced the cost of the League telephone by two-thirds thanks in part to a new arrangement with Elizabeth Glenn's home phone set-up. Converting to an online *Voter* for the majority of our members is another cost saving measure implemented by the Board a couple of years ago. All in all, I am proud to report that the Bay Area League is in an enviable position of having ample financial resources available to fulfill our mission.

Candidates Forums: Speaking of our mission, the upcoming spring city elections provide us with an opportunity to serve our communities by hosting candidates forums. While we cannot put on candidates forums for all the dozen or so cities in our area, we usually manage to do at least two. We generally see which cities approach us for help in this area. However, if you know of any city that might benefit from a nonpartisan, unbiased candidates forum, feel free to contact me. The Board weighs the number of requests versus our people/monetary resources to determine how we can best serve the citizens of the Bay Area.

March Consensus Discussion: Our next meeting will be a LWVUS consensus discussion on the National Popular Vote Compact on March 28. Diane Sheridan's article provides more detail on this topic. Knowing League members as I do, I can assure you that there will be many strong opinions on this unusual, complex, and potentially controversial issue. If you have never taken part in a League consensus discussion, I urge you to attend. Aply led by Diane Sheridan (former LWVUS board member and current professional meeting facilitator), you will be able to see how a grassroots organization like the League truly operates.

May Annual Meeting: It's never too early to start thinking about the Annual Meeting where the League elects officers, approves a budget and program for the year. Please mark Saturday, May 30 on your calendars.

The Board of Directors Wants You!: We are interested in hearing from anyone who would like to serve on the Board of Directors for next year. We meet 4 or 5 times a year on Saturdays for breakfast with emails in-between to plan, direct, and prioritize the goals and activities of the League. It is a wonderful way to foster friendships while challenging yourself and serving the community. I have made some of my best friends through serving on the League Board. Feel free to contact me if you would like more information about what is entailed. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates at the Annual Meeting in May.

CONSENSUS ON USING THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT AMONG THE STATES AS A METHOD FOR ELECTING THE PRESIDENT

Saturday, March 28, 2009

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

At the home of Diane Sheridan
1107 Live Oak Lane, Kirby Woods, Taylor Lake Village

Debating this issue on March 28 is going to take some background reading ☺ Delegates at LWVUS Convention 2008 voted to study the advisability of using the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact among the states as a method for electing the U.S. President. The compact provides a way to choose the President of the United States by popular vote without amending the Constitution. If the NPV Compact were enacted, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The NPV bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538). To date, four states have enacted NPV laws: Hawaii, Maryland, New Jersey, and Illinois.

The League has supported direct election of the President by popular vote since 1970, and has worked in past years for abolition of the Electoral College. The NPV is another approach for achieving our position. The League has no position on NPV specifically, thus the determination of whether there is consensus among Leagues across the country on NPV.

If you are able to join us on March 28 as we take part in this national League study, you will want to look at some of the materials on the LWVUS website. (If you are not computerized and need a paper copy, let Diane Sheridan know.)

At http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=National_Popular_Vote_Compact, you will find a background paper, the text of the NPV agreement, its pros and cons, and the consensus questions themselves.

Directions: KirbyWoods is off Kirby Road between NASA Road One and Red Bluff. From NASA One, turn onto Kirby at the Jack in the Box. Pass TLV City Hall and the water tower. Turn right at the KirbyWoods subdivision sign. When the short street ends, turn left onto Live Oak; 1107 will be on your left about three-fourths of the way down the block. There is a red fire hydrant and street light by the driveway. Questions? Diane Sheridan 281/326-5253 DBSheridan@aol.com

It Is Not Too Late!

LWV dues are due in September, but it is not too late to join for the remainder of the year at half the usual rate, ie. \$27 for one member, rather than \$54 for a full year's membership. Each additional person in the household who would also like to join may join at half that rate. So, if you and your spouse or child would both like to join or renew your membership(s) for half the year, your rate would be \$40.50. Regular dues will be due again in the fall. Joining before May 30 would enable you to vote at our Annual Meeting on May 30.

For more information, contact Diane Sheridan at 281-326-5253 or DBSheridan@aol.com

Report of the Election Audits Task Force

The Election Audits Task Force was convened in spring 2008 by LWVUS President Mary Wilson with the charge to produce a report taking a comprehensive view of election audits. Audits should go beyond Election Day activities and functions, and examine all aspects of the election process. Leagues should find this report useful in talking with their legislatures and elections officials about election auditing.

The Task Force presented its report in January 2009 and it can be found at the LWVUS website: www.lwv.org. This article contains election information of interest to all League members and especially to those of us who may serve as election judges or in other positions at the polls.

CALENDAR

March 2009

- 9 LWV-TX Conference and Lobby Day, Austin
- 9 Last day to file for May election
- 28 LWV-BA discussion of National Voter compact, 9:30 am, home of Diane Sheridan**

April 2009

- 4 LWV-BA Board Meeting, 9:00 am, home of Sara Young**
- 9 Last day to register to vote in May elections
- 27 Early voting starts for May elections

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.