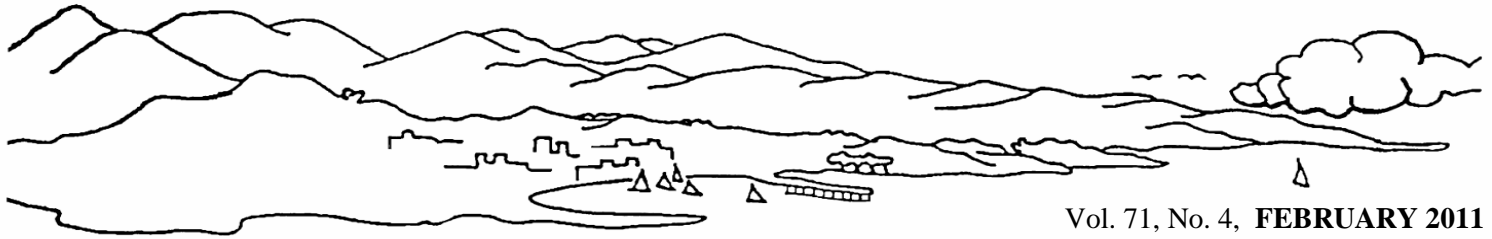




CHANNEL VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA

Serving South Santa Barbara County



Vol. 71, No. 4, FEBRUARY 2011

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY FORUM Protecting the Ocean Environment

Wednesday, February 16, 2011, at 12 - 2 p.m., Louise Lowry Davis Community Center
Corner of De La Vina & Victoria Streets - Free and open to the public.

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Martha Lannan (2011)
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At one time we thought of the ocean as something so vast, so unchanging that nothing we did would change it. Of course we know better now. Polluted runoff from the land, overfishing that upsets the natural ecological balance, ocean acidification and rising sea level – all are due to man’s actions and all are our responsibility to rectify.

Governments on the national, regional and state levels are working on how best to tackle this task. Our February Community Forum will examine some of the issues and programs involved in current ocean policy.

Kristi Birney, a marine conservation analyst at the Environmental Defense Center, will speak on the National Oceans Policy. This was announced last summer and its implementation is still being developed. Objectives of the policy include: coastal and marine spatial planning (akin to land use planning ashore); helping coastal communities cope with climate change; ocean acidification (see the CO2 article on page 2) and water quality. There is stress on coordination both of agencies and of states within specified regions, and also on science-based decisions.

The state of California has recognized the need

for an integrated approach to the management of coastal resources for some twenty years now. The Fish and Game Commission has overseen the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) to conserve and enhance resources -- an example of spatial planning. **Greg Helms**, program manager for the Ocean Conservancy in Santa Barbara, has had on the ground experience participating in the contentious process of choosing specific areas to be so designated. His report will include the moderately successful outcome of the recent MPA planning effort for Southern California. The League supported the compromise, integrated proposal.

Our third speaker will describe the problem of acidification of ocean waters, a relatively recent development. As the article on page two explains, this unfortunate phenomenon is a result of high concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. A report on the topic sponsored by the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary has had national circulation and spurred action programs in many places.

This should be a fascinating program – be sure to mark February 16 on your calendar!

Jean Holmes, Energy Consultant

FEBRUARY DISCUSSION UNITS Planning for Development on the South Coast

Many questions are being raised about the kinds of development we will see in the three cities on the South Coast. The League’s Sustainable Communities Committee has been following these, and will lead the Units to talk about what is happening in each area, and what League members think about past developments, and future plans. You may bring newspaper clippings about projects or issues and share them with the groups. There are now four choices of Discussion Units to choose from, and you will find them listed on the Calendar on the back page. You may attend whichever one fits your schedule, and we always have an interesting exchange of views.

Connie Hannah, Sustainable Communities Committee Chair

UPCOMING SOCIAL POLICY EVENTS

The LWVSB Social Policy Interest Group (SPIG) has been active on a number of issues over the last few months and there are several related upcoming events. All are open to League members and the public. Please invite friends and family.

COALITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

What Right Do You Have To Carry A Gun?

A Second Amendment Community Forum

Thursday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara Public Library

40 East Anapamu St., Santa Barbara

A panel of experts, including Judge Brian Hill, will clarify the ambiguities of the two recent Supreme Court rulings on the Second Amendment and their legal implications regarding gun control laws. They will also discuss what affect the new rulings might have on California gun laws. The panel discussion will be moderated by former Mayor Marty Blum and will conclude with a Q&A session.

Cost: FREE and open to the public.

Organized by: The Coalition Against Gun Violence

Sponsored by: American Association of University Women, Democratic Women of Santa Barbara County, League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee.

PRO-CHOICE

The SPIG signed on to the Santa Barbara Pro-Choice Coalition's annual Roe Anniversary ad and helping to coordinate the annual Roe Anniversary Celebration event. This year we did something different and presented the play, "Jane: Abortion and the Underground" at Center Stage Theater on January 15 and 16, which was sold out for the Saturday show.

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

The SPIG presented a statement to the Santa Barbara City Council Finance Committee in support of the Housing Authority's 2904 State St. - Funding Request to City Council on January 25. The Housing Authority is requesting Redevelopment Agency affordable housing set-aside funds to acquire a former 9-unit motel building at 2904 State St. The Housing Authority plans to lease the property to WillBridge, a small local non-profit that works with the chronic homeless, providing transitional housing with support services.

This advocacy action is consistent with LWVSB's position to "support appropriate solutions with adequate financing, to respond to both short and long term needs of homeless people. These include the provision of better access to existing social services, emphasis on affordable housing..." Thank you to Emily Allen and Connie Hannah for their help in making the statement.

IMMIGRATION

PUEBLO is sponsoring a workshop: **Know Your Rights - Immigration and Community Enforcement.** Sun., February 6th, at 3:00 p.m., 721 Laguna St., Santa Barbara, CA. For information about speakers (including attorneys) call 805-882-2484.

SPIG MEETINGS

The LWVSG SPIG meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 3:30 PM at the League office. All are welcome! If you would like to be added to the SPIG email list, please contact Beth Pitton-August at bpitton@gmail.com.

PLAN SANTA BARBARA STILL ON HOLD

The Santa Barbara City Council committee trying to find a compromise for the City's General Plan will continue to meet in January and February and will return to City Council at their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 1. The Ad Hoc Committee will meet on January 24 and February 17, to consider the density they want to permit downtown, and other issues. Now that Das Williams has gone to the Assembly, Bendy White has volunteered to meet with Dale Francisco and Frank Hotchkiss to see what changes to the Plan would help Council achieve the five votes that the Plan requires. A number of suggestions worked out by citizen groups and the previous committee will be under consideration again. Because it is important for the City to have a General Plan update to define future plans for development, the League will continue to follow these discussions and report back to our members.

Connie Hannah, Sustainable Communities Committee Chair

BACKGROUND FOR OCEAN PROTECTION: ANOTHER CO2 PROBLEM

Increasing levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere, a consequence of fossil fuel use, are causing immediate, measurable impacts on ocean chemistry. The oceans absorb about one-third of the carbon dioxide produced every day around the world. As carbon dioxide reacts with seawater, it lowers the water's pH, a process called acidification. This reduces the concentration of carbonate ions, which are essential for the formation of shells in shellfish and the skeletons of corals.

Recently, scientists have begun measuring these changes in ocean chemistry and investigating the possible consequences to marine life, food webs and people. The studies find that ocean acidification is ongoing and may have significant biological impacts. Some specific findings: In some species ocean acidification can result in reduced tolerance to temperature increase, impaired reproduction and growth, dissolution of larval shells and susceptibility to disease. Some of the most vulnerable species may be tiny animals at the base of the food web. Also at risk are some shellfish commonly grown or harvested for human consumption. The West Coast is experiencing a faster rate of acidification because of certain physical characteristics of the ocean here.

(Adapted from a NOAA Sea Grant brochure)

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Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org • **Web:** <http://lwvsantabarbara.org>

FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Everyone is unhappy about health care, particularly health care costs, but not everyone realizes that a national health care reform bill is law, or what is in it. Research shows that many Americans don't even know that a reform bill has passed. Start by informing yourself about what is—and is not—in the bill, and then make it a point to talk to your friends and neighbors. Some of what is included in the landmark Affordable Care Act: a guarantee that insurance companies can no longer discriminate based on pre-existing conditions, an end to lifetime caps, a requirement that insurance companies can no longer drop people when they get sick.

In addition, the bill: gives tax credits to small businesses for providing coverage for employees, requires insurers to cover preventive care at no cost.

There is misinformation being circulated about the bill's effects on Medicare. Don't let the naysayers scare seniors!

Medicare is actually being improved and strengthened. The Affordable Care Act attacks waste and fraud. The bill **adds** benefits for those on Medicare: helps seniors stay in their homes, bans discrimination based on pre-existing conditions, provides preventive care with no co-pays.

Yes, there are taxes—but **only** for those with incomes over \$200,000-\$250,000. These taxes will provide for the largest investment in the health care workforce ever made. There is a huge need for primary health care providers, and the Affordable Care Act will help fill the gap by investing in education and training, and providing incentives for these desperately needed caregivers.

Finally, for those who advocate repealing the act: this is an even more costly choice than enacting it! Repealing the act would cost an estimated \$455 billion.

What about California?

California is on the forefront of federal health care reform. This fall, the governor signed two bills creating the California Health Benefit Exchange. There are a number of challenges on the road to an operational exchange by 2014; the League will be active both in advocacy and community education. If you are interested in working on this issue, contact Helen Hutchison, hhutchison@lwvc.org.

Sign up for action alerts on the LWVC Web site. Go to lwvc.org and click on "Sign up for E-News" at the upper left. On the sign-up page, choose "Action Alerts." Here are sites where you can find good information:

<http://www.healthcare.gov/law/introduction/index.html>,
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform/healthcare-overview>,
<http://www.chcf.org/health-policy-office>.

Update from the President's Letter in the LWVUS Leaders' Update, January 20 (emphasis added):

...we continue to follow the health care debate closely. Yesterday, the House voted 245-189 to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Today, the League sent a letter to the Senate urging that body to oppose repeal of the Act, and the LWVUS Lobby Corps visited Senate offices this month with our message. **It's now critical that you weigh in, too, and tell your Senators to oppose repeal of the Affordable Care Act.** As provisions of the Act are being implemented, more and more Americans are getting health care coverage while health care costs are reduced for individuals, businesses and communities. **Please also encourage your family, friends and coworkers to join in this urgent effort.**

Stay up to date on this hot issue by checking our blog (http://participate.lwv.org/p/salsa/web/blog/public/?log_KEY=452)

HEALTH CARE REFORM: League Offers Education on the Affordable Care Act 2010

At this writing, Congress is debating repeal of the Affordable Care Act. LWVUS has been broadcasting alerts to members to "Tell your Representative to oppose repeal of the Affordable Care Act." LWVC Vice President of Advocacy, Helen Hutchison, has sent state league leaders an article (see below) to disseminate to members and the public clarifying key benefits of this new federal reform law. Locally, last September at the Franklin Community Center, our League cosponsored with the Children's Health

Initiative of Santa Barbara the forum, "What Health Reform Means to You". The videotape of this forum will air on public access Channel 21 sometime in February (TBA).

At our April Community Forum, we will again co-sponsor with Children's Health Initiative a health reform forum on the implementation in California of the Affordable Care Act. League members interested in helping develop this forum are encouraged to contact Carole Marks @ 682-1228 or carolemarks@cox.net.

Membership News:

All of our National Members who joined LWVUS last year have been removed from our data base and are now on a "Donor List" at the National Office. If any past national members would like to join locally, please send the renewal form with \$60 in soon so that we can add you to the new directory. Several National members joined March through June of 2010 and now can join and be a member until August 2012. We will send you an Mail or Email alert that your Membership has ended.

New Members:

Ruth Drake

Sallie W. Coughlin

Sally Stanton

Linda Mathews

Barbara O'Grady and John Prebish

Amanda Pelch, Membership Chair

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2011

Discussion Units: Planning for Development on the South Coast

- 1 **Tuesday: Supper Unit meeting**, 5:30 p.m., Madam Lu's Restaurant. Contact Lolly Quackenbush, 879-5537
- 2 **Wednesday: Evening Unit**, 7:30 p.m., Sheila Kamhi's home, 5044 Walnut Park Drive. Contact co-chair: Sheila Kamhi at 682-0757.
- 9 **Wednesday: Carpinteria Unit**, 10 a.m., Carpinteria Women's Club, 1059 Vallecito. Chair: Barbara Godley, 969-9942.
- 9 **Wednesday: Valle Verde Unit**, 2 p.m., North Gazebo, 900 Calle de los Amigos. Contact Jean Kerns at 687-7035.
- 11 **Friday: League Board Meeting**, 10 a.m., League Office at 328 E. Carrillo St.
- 16 **Wednesday: Community Forum: Protecting the Ocean Environment**, 12 p.m., Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De la Vina and Victoria streets. Speakers will be **Kristi Birney**, a marine conservation analyst at the Environmental Defense Center, **Greg Helms**, program manager for the Ocean Conservancy in Santa Barbara, and a third speaker to be announced.

- 17 **Thursday: What Right Do You Have To Carry A Gun? A Second Amendment Community Forum**, at 6:30 p.m., Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara Public Library, 40 East Anapamu St., Santa Barbara, CA. For more information, contact Dorie Kirtman, 845-6866, dbdb2@hotmail.com.

Looking Ahead To March:

- 19 **Saturday: SAVE THE DATE - Women Matter: Healthy Mothers Equal Healthy Societies, Fighting Maternal Mortality in the Developing World**, at 10:00 a.m. to noon, Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara Public Library, 40 East Anapamu St., Santa Barbara, CA.
Featuring Jane Roberts, co-founder of 34 Million Friends of the United National Population Fund. The LWVSB is a co-sponsor with the AAUW, CARE, UCSB's Sociology Department and the Santa Barbara Women's Health Coalition. More information to come.
Contact Jane Honikman, 967-9757 or jane@janehonikman.com

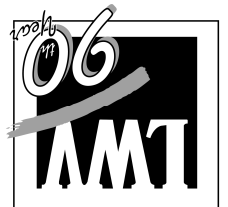
Remember to check the LWVSB web site
(<http://lwvsantabarbara.org>)
for the latest event information.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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