



Channel **VOTER**

serving South Santa Barbara County

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>

Vol. 70, No. 1, **September 2007**



League Ph/Fax: 965-2422 • Membership Director, Joanie Jones • President, Linda Phillips

SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY FORUM: IMMIGRATION STUDY

Wednesday, September 19, 12:15 to 2 p.m.

Louise Lowry Davis Community Center, De La Vina & Victoria Streets

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Introduction: Jessica Dean, Chair, Immigration Study Committee LWVSB

Immigration report from recent SB County Grand Jury: Presented by **Beverly King**
Immigration and the Economy: **Chris Carson**, LWVUS Immigration Study Committee
Immigration and Sustainability Issues: Presented by **Janet Graham**

This is the first LWVUS Study in 15 years! As such it is significant to League members, but as caring and affected citizens it is very important and indeed urgent to all of us – first on a local level, second on a state level and principally on a national level.

It is nationally that immigration policy is made, nationally that we will be answering consensus questions regarding that policy, and nationally that our lobbyists will be speaking for us once a position is reached.

Our opening community forum, on September 19, will kick off our local Immigration Study with a brief look at what's happening at the county level. We have in our midst a member of the most recent Grand Jury, Susan Shank, and immigration was one of their selected study areas. Susan has provided us with a summary of the report. She is not available on the date of the Forum, but Bev King of our committee will present it to us.

We are very fortunate to have with us Chris Carson of the Glendale-Burbank League. Chris is a member of the board of LWVC and a member of the LWVUS National Immigration Study Committee. She will be giving us a look at the impact of immigration – both authorized and unauthorized – on the economy.

And finally Janet Graham and Carmela Galvez of our local Immigration Study Committee have

prepared a report on the possible impacts of various levels of immigration on the sustainability of the environment and natural resources. Their findings are based on readings of scientific and demographic studies and remind us that the principal of sustainability is fundamental to League concerns.

All of this is geared to giving our members a background with which to attend the two sets of consensus units in October and November. This issue includes a research paper from the LWVUS Immigration Committee on family reunification (see p. 3). Watch for a special edition of the *Channel Voter*, which will include other in-depth articles on various aspects of immigration as well as the consensus questions.

JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 19! If you want to check out the LWVUS research papers, go to the LWVUS Web site, www.lwv.org.

Jessica Dean, Chair, Immigration Committee

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From the President's Desk...

A Busy Year Ahead of Us...

LWVSB is one of the most dynamic Leagues around. I feel privileged to be starting my term as your president, with a great board and many hard-working members. Our busy year has already started – no August vacation for League this year! And it promises to be even busier than usual in the coming months.

Our strength comes from our members, and I urge you all to participate as much as you can, in whichever activities resonate the most with you. Our monthly Community Forums feature speakers on topics of interest to League members and the community at large, and are always free and open to all. Units are smaller groups so that members can discuss issues more thoroughly. In our first two sets of units this fall (October and November), we will be helping to decide what position LWV should take nationally on the hot topic of immigration – the criteria for any future League advocacy on immigration. This is our first national study in a long time, and you'll see much more about it in this and upcoming issues of the *Voter* from Jessica Dean and her dedicated committee members.

Voters Service will be busy helping voters with impartial information on three elections in the coming nine months, including the new February presidential primary. Propositions are likely to be on the ballots at all three elections. League may decide to support or oppose some of them, so we may present impartial Pros & Cons and also be involved in advocacy.

You'll see a whole range of activities, from committees to mailing parties to Adopt-a-Poll; from advocacy and Calls to Action on all three levels – local, state, and national, to our new Lunch Bunches. And it's not all serious stuff – come to our parties too! I look forward to seeing and working with every one of you.



Homeland Security at Home update:

As I write this, planes and helicopters keep flying overhead. Sometime today, the Zaca Fire will become the second largest in California since good data has been available – 75 years. I keep thinking of our Community Forum in February 2006, on “Homeland Security at Home.” This was done in conjunction with an LWVUS educational project, which focused on community preparedness for all sorts of disasters and emergencies.

We highlighted a few key issues: We showed how the various agencies worked well together here – much better than in many other areas. Emergency notification for evacuations and warnings, reverse 911, needed improvement. Speakers told us about using a recent bike race as a training exercise, coordinating with wildland residents up on San Marcos Pass.

During this fire, we have seen the emergency response in practice. Agencies have worked so well together that CALFIRE Chief Rick Henson (from San Diego) said of the entire operation, “I’ve been doing this for 30 years, and I have never seen an operation quite like this. The cooperation has just been outstanding. Everybody dropped their egos and personal agendas and came together to fight this fire.” One of our speakers, Sgt. Tom Walton, has been improving the reverse 911 system, including adding cell phone numbers for Paradise residents, and has been actively using it during the Zaca Fire. More training exercises and drills have been held in a couple of different neighborhoods, such as the one on the Riviera, and the residents participated and took them seriously. When Paradise was evacuated, earlier preparations and a town hall meeting allowed residents to plan so well that “not a toe was stubbed.”

While no one can predict what the fire will do next, we can be grateful to our firefighters and other emergency responders who have been working so hard on our “homeland security at home.”

Linda Phillips, President

SANTA BARBARA CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES FORUM

Santa Barbara residents will have the opportunity to hear from their city council candidates at the League-sponsored Candidates Forum, 7 to 9 p.m., on October 11 in the Faulkner Gallery of the Main Library. Please come, and bring friends and neighbors!

The Channel Voter is published eight times a year, monthly except for January, June, July, and August, by the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters, 328A E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY: FAMILY REUNIFICATION

By Patricia Hatch

“Family reunification has long been a cornerstone of both American law and INS practice” notes Doris Meissner, former Commissioner of the INS.



1965 Immigration Act

The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the national origin quota system that had favored immigrants from Europe to the exclusion of those from other parts of the world. That system was replaced by a “family preference” quota framework that systematized the sponsorship of relatives by legal immigrants. Since 1965 between 50 and 70 percent of U.S. immigrant visas distributed annually have been allotted to close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. Annual ceilings do limit the number of family visas that can be awarded, both by country of origin and by preference category.

Family immigration currently accounts for the majority of immigrant petitions filed and visas granted each year. Hence the fairness, orderliness and timeliness of the family immigration process - or lack thereof - have major implications for the success or failure of the entire U.S. immigration policy. Spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens as well as parents of adult U.S. citizens are granted visas without regard to numerical quotas (i.e. they are outside the preference category framework presented below). If all goes smoothly these applicants may be allowed to immigrate within a year of the filing of an immigrant petition by their U.S. citizen spouse, parent, or adult child.

On the other hand those applicants who fall under the jurisdiction of the preference category framework currently face a much longer wait - from 5 to 7 years or longer.

- *First preference:* Unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens - 23,400
- *Second preference:* Spouses and unmarried children of lawful permanent residents - 114,200
- *Third Preference:* Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens - 23,400
- *Fourth Preference:* Siblings of U.S. citizens - 65,000

These total 226,000.

The Application Process

U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents (green card holders) initiate the sponsorship of their qualifying family member by filing with the appropriate service center of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). Theoretically the USCIS can approve the visa petition within a few months, but long processing delays are routine. The Annual Report submitted to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary in June 2006 reported that “over one million family-based immigration petitions are pending with USCIS. Most of these petitions have been pending for many years and may not be adjudicated for many more years . . .”

The Approval Process

Approval of a visa petition – however long that might take – is only the first step. Once the petition has been fully processed, an approval notice is issued and the date of that notice becomes the prospective immigrant’s “priority date.” Because the number of applicants in each preference category annually exceeds available quotas, a cumulative backlog has grown to mind-boggling proportions in each category. By 1997 backlogs totaled an estimated 3,535,430 cases of approved family-based petitions including 1,252,270 spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents. It could take as long as twenty years for the spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents to legally join them in the U.S. As noted in the recent report from the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America’s Future (co-chaired by Spencer Abraham and Lee Hamilton), “In addition to being inhumane, such waits mean that a large portion of such individuals’ productive working years will have passed by the time many ever arrive in the U.S.”

Some “anchor relatives,” faced with these huge waits, attempt to secure visitor visas or student visas only to find that consular offices routinely deny non-immigrant visas to immediate family members of legal permanent residents on the grounds that that they are “intending immigrants” and likely to overstay their visas. Thus all legal channels for the family to reunite are effectively blocked and contribute to unauthorized migration and to a significant percentage of the 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S.

In Search of a Solution

What is the solution? Some have suggested eliminating the family preference categories for everyone except the spouses and minor children of citizens and permanent residents, and reallocating to these family members the visas currently designated for adult sons and daughters and the siblings of U.S. citizens. Many advocates of family unity have proposed placing the spouses and children of permanent residents outside the preference quotas so that they can join their anchor relatives as soon as possible. And immigration reform that allows for more timely reunion of families must be accompanied by additional staffing of USCIS immigrant petition processing centers and visa processors.

Unless our nation finds the political courage to come to grips with the short- and long-term implications of our current untenable policy, tens of thousands of families are likely to continue resorting to unauthorized immigration.

Patricia Hatch, LWV Howard County, Maryland
(Excerpted by Jessica Dean from a background paper provided by the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee)



ADVOCACY TRAINING FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

During the 2006-2007 League of Women Voters year, health care reform finally became a major political issue. Contributing to the emphasis was the awareness that the system of employer-sponsored health plans was unraveling due to escalating health care costs, and that state and federal budget deficits have forced cutbacks in health safety net programs. In California, Governor Schwarzenegger highlighted “universal health care” as a state priority, with the Democratic leadership rising up with competing proposals. Grass roots organizations and other active health care reform coalitions around the state have also raised public consciousness and media attention. And now, Michael Moore’s movie, *SICKO*, has argued that private health insurance companies must be replaced with a single payer universal health care system, as LWV has advocated for years.

Santa Barbara and many other California Leagues honored the commitment to educate and advocate for the single payer solution. We supported the OneCareNow 365-City Campaign for universal health care beginning in Morro Bay on August 12, 2006 and culminating in a massive rally on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall on August 11,

2007. Photos of these events can be found on the LWVC website (<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/healthcare>) along with background information and in-depth resources: Senator Sheila Kuehl’s SB 840; LWVC’s “Evaluation Criteria for Health Care Reform Proposals;” and a comparison chart of key California proposals prepared by the Senate Office of Research.

The debate on how to extend health care benefits to all or most of California residents is an ideal platform for the OneCareNow campaign to continue toward building a massive movement to pass a single payer system in California. It promises to be a hot topic in the coming election year, and will provide an opportunity for Leaguers to educate, educate, educate!

To prepare for this task League members are invited to attend a OneCareNow Advocacy Training (See Calendar p. 8) on Saturday morning, September 15, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Unitarian Church. For more information about the training and the LWVSB Health Committee education project, please contact Carole Marks: 682-1228.

*Carole Marks, Second Vice-President
(Administration) and Health Care*

LEAGUE LAND USE TOPICS FOR THE FALL

League members have been working on a number of land use issues that will require action this fall. We are listing them here in the hope that you will follow them too. Look for these topics in subsequent newsletter articles. Every year when we review our existing League positions, members indicate that they are satisfied with them and want us to use them. This is your chance to participate. Please join us in studying and acting on these important topics.

Proposed Goleta General Plan Amendments

The new Goleta City Council has just initiated 100 changes to the newly adopted General Plan. These seriously undermine the Land Use and Conservation Elements. They will have major impacts on land use and the environmental protections that were built into the original General Plan. A public workshop is scheduled for September 15.

Height Limitations for the City of Santa Barbara

Since no action is being taken by the city council to control excessive building heights, a publicly sponsored initiative is being proposed. League members have been involved in this issue since the beginning, and discussions are still underway. We predict that they will probably result in a 40-foot height limit for El Pueblo Viejo (the historic district) and a 45-foot limit for the rest of the city. This initiative is being considered for the November 2008 ballot.

Changes to Santa Barbara County Rules for Agricultural Lands

Amendments to the Uniform Rules (the county rules that enforce the Williamson Act to protect agriculture) will be up for consideration this fall. Many of these proposed changes will have serious effects on the preservation of agricultural lands.

Carpinteria Resistance to Veneco’s Paredon Project

The citizens of Carpinteria have mounted a strong campaign to stop Veneco from building a new oil project just behind their city hall. Members of the League’s Carpinteria Unit have been very active and are working hard to stop this project.

City of Santa Barbara General Plan Update

Major meetings are being scheduled from now until 2009. All League members living in the City of Santa Barbara are encouraged to attend and participate so that our voices will be heard in future planning for the city. Check the city’s Web page for background information and dates of upcoming meetings. Log onto YourPlanSB.org.

Preservation of Naples

The League has participated for over three years in the Naples Coalition. Our objective is to get the best possible project for this unique piece of land on the Gaviota Coast. The Revised Environmental Impact Report on Naples is

(Continued on page 5)

due out any time, and this will be the start of a long planning process. Concurrently Santa Barbara County is working on a Transfer of Development Rights program to determine if it is feasible to protect some of this coastal land.

A New Lofts Project Proposed for Upper State Street

This project has returned about 24% smaller than the original one, which the League and other organizations successfully appealed to the Santa Barbara City Council. What happens with this large project will set the tone for the rest of Upper State Street. In our opinion it still does not conform to the SD-2 zoning. This new Lofts project has just had concept review, so we are awaiting the actual plans. The proposal is for 34 market rate units and 10 workforce units, roughly 31 units to the acre. We will be looking to see if this project meets the recently adopted Guidelines for Upper State Street and whether it addresses our previous concerns.

The Entrada Project Returns

According to press reports, the firm that took over the Entrada project after Levy's bankruptcy is about to start work under the old permits. The League and Citizens Planning Association had filed a lawsuit to require an Environmental Impact Report focused on Views, but we were still not happy with the resulting plan. We are very concerned about this unknown firm and anxious to see if this project is really coming out of limbo, and what will happen with it.

Big, Tall, Bulky Projects Slated for All Over the City of Santa Barbara

Along with the Lofts project mentioned above, several big projects on Upper State Street are in various stages of the planning process. (They were on hold until after the

Upper State Street Study and transportation studies were finished.) Environmental Impact Reports are being prepared for the Radio Square project on Carrillo Street and the Andalusia project on Lower State Street. A large project at 535 Montecito Street that has been on a two-year hiatus is now back. League members have been following these projects and will continue to work on them (if their energy holds out). This is where we really need help.

New Inclusionary Requirements for City of Santa Barbara Projects

Recently, Santa Barbara City Council has decided that the inclusionary ordinance should apply to small projects of two or more units (the existing ordinance only applies to those with 10 or more units). These projects would either pay in-lieu fees or build workforce affordable units for those making over 120% of median income. These provisions will now go to the Ordinance Committee and Santa Barbara City Council for implementation.

County Housing Element

Based on the recently approved Isla Vista Master Plan, the County now has enough affordable housing planned to meet the State requirements and the County is applying to the State for certification of their Housing Element. Immediately thereafter the County will embark on the next Housing Element Update. The number of units mandated by the State for this Update is being thrashed out at SBCAG now.

Measure D To Return in 2008

Work is underway to prepare another ballot measure for the 1/2 cent sales tax to benefit transportation. All of the jurisdictions and MTD urgently need this money.

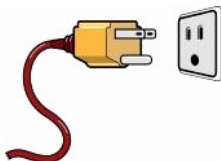
Connie Hannah, Sustainable Communities Chair, 967-4720

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant, 966-0536, mccammon@cox.net

COMMUNITY CHOICE – DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

In case you don't, I will explain: community choice aggregation was one of the topics covered in our League energy study. The term refers to an arrangement whereby a community can select the sources of the electric power distributed in the community by the local utility. For a city or county interested in greater use of alternative energy the advantage is obvious.

In July I attended a workshop on the topic presented by the Community Environmental Council (CEC) and the Local Government Commission. The California Energy Commission is sponsoring



twelve pilot projects to test the feasibility of community choice; an economic analysis for one of those projects predicts little extra cost to increase the percentage of green power beyond that provided by the utilities. Indeed in the long run 50% green might even be cheaper than electricity procured by the utility.

Locally the CEC will coordinate two feasibility studies, one for cities and counties in Edison's territory and one for those in PG&E land. It will be interesting to watch this process unfold and see what comes of it.

Jean Holmes, Energy Chair

TIME TO SOLVE WATER PROBLEMS?



The Water Committee will resume regular monthly meetings, starting Tuesday, September 25, at noon in the League office.

This month's agenda includes a comparison of water rates among the water entities on the South Coast, compiled by the County Water Agency. (That saved our committee a lot of work!)

The preliminary planning process for the California Water Plan for 2009 will be discussed next. Four of our members attended an all-day workshop sponsored by

the California Department of Water Resources. (Two of our members attended by MTD bus.) We will be anxious to discuss the issues discussed in the different groups.

As usual, if you want to talk about something else, it will be added to the agenda. Join us at the League office. Some of us usually bring a bag lunch. Contact Joan Kerns or Pat Shewczyk, co-chairs, for more information. Members are called by Pat, who would be happy to add you to the list.

Pat Shewczyk, Co-Chair, Water Committee

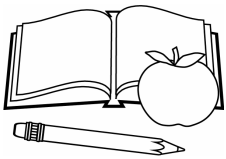
MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE WELCOMES INTERESTED LWV

The Mental Health Committee meets for coffee hour and discussion at 1:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month, starting with the September 18 meeting. Join us for news and discussion of local mental health and related social policy issues. Participants are also encouraged to go on to the monthly meeting of the Santa Barbara County Mental Health Commission at 3:00 p.m. Commission meetings are held at the Santa Barbara Children's Building, large conference room, 429 N. San Antonio Road, Santa Barbara.

For the location of the September meeting place and for further information about the Mental Health Committee, call Dorothy Semmel, 682-8377.

Dorothy Semmel, Human Resources/Social Policy Director

LWVSB EDUCATION FUND WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER



At its annual board meeting, the LWVSB Education Fund Board of Directors welcomed new board member Emily Allen, a new member of the League and an attorney in private practice in Santa Barbara. The board also re-elected the current officers for the 2007-2008 year. They are: Irene Stone, President; Connie Hannah, Vice-President; Stacy Shepherd, Secretary; and Dawn Kirchner, Treasurer. In addition to the above officers, the other directors are Tom Heck, Jean Holmes, Beverly King, Bill Marks, Cathie McCammon, and Peg Martin. The board will be considering additional members in the coming months. Please contact Irene Stone, 453-2004, with inquiries.

The purpose of the LWVSB Education Fund is to provide non-partisan information about issues and governmental processes in order to enable citizens to become active and informed voters. The Education Fund finances the Voters Service/Citizen Education activities of the League.

As a 501(c)(3) corporation, all contributions to the Fund are tax-deductible. Contributions can be mailed to the League office at any time.

Irene Stone, LWVSB EF President

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please welcome our new members:

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Allyn & George Gaynes
Santa Barbara

Doris Palmer
Santa Barbara

S. Robert Bronfen & Joan Sullivan
Santa Barbara

Melinda Hellyer
Santa Barbara

Michael Tucker
Santa Ynez

Betsy R. Cramer
Santa Barbara

Barbara Krahn
Santa Barbara

Diane W. Wolf
Santa Barbara

Erik Davis
Carpinteria

Betsy M. Munroe
Santa Barbara

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER AND THANK YOU!

To Herb Linville and all who helped send out our letters of membership renewal in August, many thank you's from your membership committee. Now is the time to thank all of you who have renewed your local League membership before the September 1 expiration date. You are supporting a fine organization on the local, state and national levels when you join the LWV of Santa Barbara.

I encourage those who have not yet put that envelope and/or green interest survey in the mail to do so. We are an all volunteer organization and would like to know your interests and level of availability. So as my letter said, "It is that TIME AGAIN!" Please send your renewal of membership, \$60, or other amount if appropriate, to League of Women Voters, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

*Joanie Jones, Membership Development
and Data Administrator*

If you know someone who might be interested in the League, please pass along this application:

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, SANTA BARBARA

Here's my annual membership dues of \$60*

Name _____

Second member in same household \$30

Address _____

Student \$30

_____ Zip _____

Please send me more information about League

Phone _____ Fax _____

I can't join right now; here is my contribution of
\$_____ to support the League.

E-mail _____

Make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Discounted dues are available for special circumstances. Contract Joanie Jones - 683-1937.*

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CALENDAR - SEPTEMBER 2007

- 11 Tuesday **Immigration Study Committee:** 1 p.m. Home of Bev King, 1925 Laguna, 687-1124.
- 14 Friday **Board Meeting:** 10 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 15 Saturday **OneCareNow (OCN) Advocacy Training for Universal Health Care:** "Real health care reform? California politics and players." 10 a.m.-12 noon. Unitarian Church. La Paz Room. 1535 Santa Barbara Street (at Arrellaga). Call Carole Marks: 682-1228.
- 17 Monday **October Channel Voter deadline.**
- 18 Tuesday **Mental Health Committee meeting:** 1:30 p.m. For location or further information, call Dorothy Semmel, 682-8377.
- 19 Wednesday **Community Forum: "Immigration"** 12:15-2 p.m. Speakers will include LWVSB Immigration Study Committee members **Jessica Dean, Bev King, and Janet Graham**, and special guest **Chris Carson** (LWVUS Immigration Study Committee). Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Brown bag lunch. Cookies and drinks provided.
- 25 Tuesday **Water Committee meeting:** 12 noon, League office. Contact Pat Shewczyk at 964-7506.

LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER

Discussion Units: Immigration

- 2 Tuesday **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Lolly Quackenbush, 879-5537.
- 3 Wednesday **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2 p.m. at the Carpinteria Women's Club at 1059 Vallecito Rd., Carpinteria. **NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE!** Potluck salad luncheon. Contact: Barbara Godley, 969-9942.
- 3 Wednesday **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Sheila Kamhi, 1040 Portesuello, 682-0757.
- 10 Wednesday **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead, 964-0886.
- 11 Thursday **Santa Barbara City Council Candidates Forum:** 7-9 p.m. Faulkner Gallery, Main Branch of Santa Barbara Public Library, 40 E. Anapamu.



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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. If you would like to join the local League, call the League office at 965-2422.

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