







THE VOTER

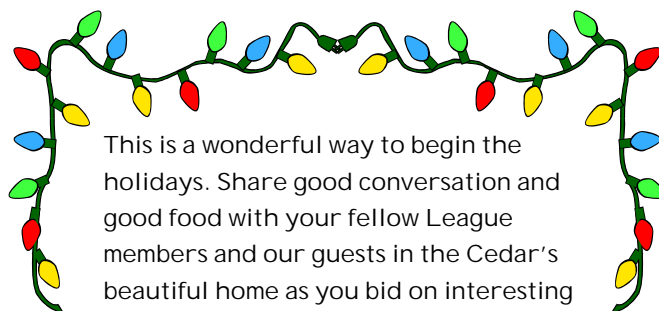
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 10, No. 9

December 2005/January 2006

HOLIDAY SOCIAL AND SILENT AUCTION ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

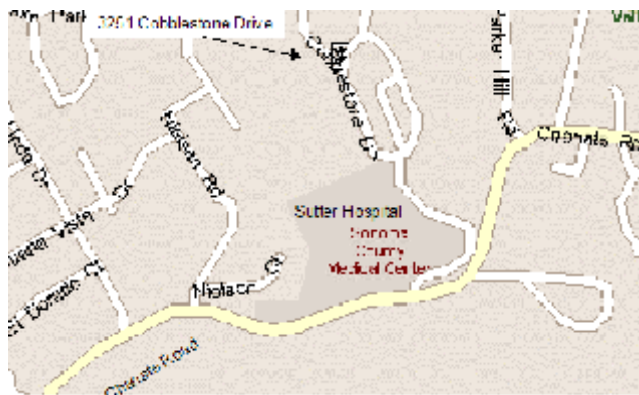
-  Sunday, December 4, 2:00 to 5:00 PM
-  At the home of Anita and William Cedar
3251 Cobblestone Drive
Santa Rosa
-  Each member is asked to bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Wine, coffee and tea will be provided.
-  Guests are welcome. No need to RSVP, but call Sandy Benson at 763-1629 if you have questions.



This is a wonderful way to begin the holidays. Share good conversation and good food with your fellow League members and our guests in the Cedar's beautiful home as you bid on interesting silent auction items.

Directions

- Take Mendocino Avenue to Chanate Road toward Sutter Hospital.
- Past the hospital, just before the curve, turn left onto Cobblestone Drive.
- Bear left on Cobblestone about one block to Scrub Oak Drive. 3251 Cobblestone is on the corner with ample parking. There is a side path that leads from the driveway up to the house for those who prefer to not climb stairs.



ENERGY UPDATE MEETING PLANNED FOR JANUARY 28

See details on p. 2.



This issue of the VOTER is for December 2005 and January 2006. If required, a supplemental issue will be published in early January to cover League events that were not finalized by this issue's deadline.

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of Sonoma County**

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Willard Richards, VP Action
Helen Sundergill, VP Administration
Alexandra Benson, VP Program
Chlele Gummer, Secretary
Susannah Likins, Treasurer

Directors:

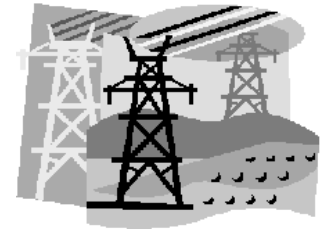
George Ellman, Transportation & Land Use
Lucille Foster, Education
Laurie Hall & Susan Milstein, Public Relations
Olive Horrell, Membership
Rosalie Gillmore & Amy Southwick, Voters
Service

VOTER Team:

Jack Dupre, VOTER Editor
Marsha Vas Dupre
May Huddleston
Lynda Hungerford
Caroline Ramberg
Nancy Richards

CALLING ALL CITIZENS

**Circle Saturday, January
28, on your calendar for
an Energy Update meeting.**



Bring a bag lunch and join us at the Rincon Valley Library, 6959 Montecito Blvd., Santa Rosa from 10:00 AM to approximately 3:00 PM.

This is our chance to have an impact on our state electrical structure. Bring your friends and neighbors.

In the morning, your Energy Update Committee will present the main issues, possibilities and proposals made by our state Energy Committee over the past two years. Members of the committee are: Ardath Lee, George Ellman, Maureen Latimer, Stan Gold, Roger White, Willard Richards, and Phyllis Stanley (coordinator).

Sandy Benson is in charge of refreshments. Coffee and tea will be available. You may bring finger foods and a bag lunch if you desire.

After lunch, we will have a consensus meeting (LWV members only) to determine how we shall base our action on the upcoming legislative decisions in California. This is the educational process, which precedes the League's advocacy.

Background information is essential in order to come to a consensus. This is the time when the League has an opportunity to make a difference in the California energy structure.

Some of the issues at stake are:

1. Reliable electrical service
2. Use of renewable resources
3. Equitable rate structure
4. Environmental protection
5. Accountability & transparency in government
6. Public participation

There are many ways to prepare for this meeting. Read the series of five articles on the LWVC energy study published in the VOTER. The last in this series, "Focusing Our Thoughts—the League and Energy" is on p. 5 in this issue. In addition, you may view and download the excellent Study Guide. This 88-page report should be on the reading list of anyone interested in the supply of electrical energy in California. It is available on the LWVC website at

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/edfund/citizened/natres/energy/index.html>. A link to the Energy Update Study is also listed on the LWVC home page <http://ca.lwv.org/>.

Phyllis Stanley

BOOK CLUB CORNER

If your New Year's resolution is to learn more about public policy issues or to read more, consider the League Book Group. We invite you to an organizational meeting on Thursday, January 19, at 10:30 AM in the



League Office (100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa). At that time, we will pick the best meeting time and place for the group and select books for at least the next six months.

So, if you have been tempted to join us, but the time wasn't right or the books were not quite what you had in mind, this is your chance to help us make the changes to accommodate the most members.

If you simply can't make the January meeting, but are interested in participating, please contact me (lh@sonic.net or 539-5770) with your suggestions.

The book group is not meeting in December.

Lynda Hungerford

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Congratulations to our member, Ron Sundergill, on his new appointment as Pacific Region Director of the National Parks Conservation Foundation! The NPCA is the premier organization working to protect and enhance our National Park System for present and future generations. The organization, established in 1919, now has 300,000 members throughout the US, with offices in Washington, DC and in 12 regions, including the Pacific Regional Office in Oakland. NPCA is a non-profit 501(c)(3).



All of our members will be receiving the new roster soon. Please take the time to check the accuracy of your personal information. Remember that the roster is for the use of our members only and should not be used for activities outside of League. We are looking for a volunteer to take on the publishing of the roster next year. This could be a great project for a member who would like to work from home. Give me a call if you are interested and I will give you all the details.

Bay Area League Day on Friday, January 27, will be held at the Unitarian Church in Oakland. The Natural Resources/Water Committee will be coordinating the speakers on the topic of "State of the Bay: Restoration and Access." Let me know if you are interested in attending so we can organize carpools.

Corol Ann Fontana-Cary

UNA ASSOCIATION MEETING

On Wednesday, December 7, at 7:00 PM, a talk on "Population & the Environment: The Impact of Withholding Funds from the UN's Population Program" will be given by Jane Roberts, founding member of 34 Million Friends. The Sonoma County Branch of UNA in cooperation with the World Affairs Council is sponsoring this talk to be held at Spring Lake Village Auditorium, 5555 Montgomery Drive in Santa Rosa.



MISSION

The League of Women Voters, 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.

VOTERS SERVICE

The November 8, 2005 special election is history and Voters Service will gear up for the 2006 elections. In June, there will be primaries followed by the November 2006 U.S. Congressional elections. It is highly probable that state propositions will appear at each election. We will continue to keep you up-to-date on election information.

League members gave Pros and Cons presentations to a number of groups for the November 8 special election. The League also sponsored a public forum on the pros and cons of the eight state propositions and the county-wide GMO Measure M at the Rincon Valley Library on October 18, 2005. The pros and cons presenters were: Carol Adams, Railey Album, Lynn Camhi, Marsha Dupre, George Ellman, Jane Ernsberger, Rosalie Gillmore, Susan Gorin, Chlele Gummer, Janie Hawker, Lynda Hungerford, Nancy Richards, Willard Richards, Ethel Schy, Amy Southwick and Len Swenson.

We started on the process of helping Katrina evacuees vote in a possible New Orleans election in February, 2006. It would be helpful if anyone who knows any evacuees to please call the League and leave information on how to reach them.

Voters Service will contact the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters in early January for information on the 2006 elections.

Voters Service coordinators are:

Forums

Amy Southwick and Rosalie Gillmore

Pros and Cons

Janie Hawker

Outreach Events

Janie Hawker

Outreach Voter Registration Forms

Glenice Anderson

Sonoma County Harvest Fair

Corol Ann Fontana-Cary

Public Relations (all media)

Laurie Hall and Susan Milstein

Smart Voter

Lynda Hungerford

There will **not** be a Voters Service meeting in December.

Amy Southwick and Rosalie Gillmore

Voters Service Co-chairs

FOCUSING OUR THOUGHTS

The League and Energy

Over the past two years the LWVC Energy Update Study Committee has published a series of four short papers designed to acquaint you with the ways in which the electricity system in California functions, with its weaknesses and strengths, and with the ways in which it is governed.

Now we are approaching the time for discussion and consensus. This fifth paper presents you with a series of thought-provoking questions intended to help you put together values and priorities that have emerged from your study. THESE ARE NOT THE CONSENSUS QUESTIONS. They are intended as aids as you organize your thoughts. A brief background statement precedes each question.

1. Background: It was thought that a competitive day-ahead and spot market for power generation would lead to the creation of more energy producers. In fact, the availability of long-term contracts has proved to be a greater inducement to investment. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has called for an open competitive generation procurement process to be conducted by the investor-owned utilities (IOUs) leading to long-term contracts.

Question: Do you believe that this will foster a competitive market structure? Can you perceive potential problems that might develop?

2. Background: Direct access to the wholesale energy market (non-utility generation) has been opened to communities and other aggregated consumer groups.

Question: If your community voted to enroll in the Community Choice Aggregation plan, what would you expect of the service, as compared with the service you currently receive from the investor-owned utility (IOU) in your area? E.g., rates, reliability, green energy sources, conservation programs, other.

3. Background: Since deregulation, and the subsequent failure of the market-based system that followed, decision makers have been struggling with the challenge of designing a new system that combines a healthy electricity industry with the reliability, fairness, and transparency of operation that the public deserves. Introduction of the competitive market into what was previously a regulated monopoly system has resulted in what is called a "hybrid" system with unregulated merchant generators providing much of the state's power.

Question: Is there some way that reliability, fairness, and transparency of operation can be achieved under a hybrid system? Are there facets of the electricity industry that must be regulated to ensure these ends? In a hybrid system, how can comprehensive

integrated long range planning be effectively implemented?

4. Background: In the Energy Action Plan, the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Energy Commission have designated renewable energy sources as second, after efficiency and conservation, on California's list of preferred electricity sources. Utilities contract for power from renewables from many independent generators, generally paying rates that are subsidized by the public goods charge on the utility bill. Due to the distributed location of these sources, additional transmission lines are needed to deliver this power to demand centers, and there is some debate as to who should bear the cost of this new transmission. Some of this new re-

newable generation will be owned by the utilities, but most will probably be built and owned by independent producers.

Question: Given that much renewable generation will be procured from a mix of relatively small, non-utility generators, distributed around the state, how should the costs of additional transmission lines be allocated?

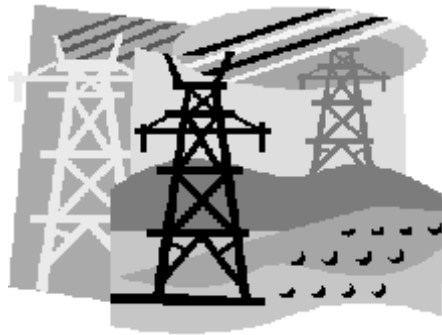
5. Background: Municipal utilities provide about 25 percent of the electricity sold in California; much of the power they buy comes from outside the state. "Munis" are not regulated by the CPUC.

Question: Should municipal utilities be expected to adhere to the same requirements for renewable energy and energy efficiency, reserve capacity and controls on greenhouse gas emissions as the investor-owner utilities? If not, what requirements should be enacted?

6. Background: The role of the public in determining the direction of California's electricity system is taking on increased importance. Consumer response as to choice of servers, demand-side management, and efficiency measures of many kinds is being factored into utilities' resource plans. Photovoltaic installations are encouraged by net-metering, performance-based rates and subsidies. (Subsidies are rebates that are based on the manufacturer's rated system capacity, the kilowatts, not the actual amount of energy produced, the kilowatt-hours. Performance-based rates take into account the amount of energy produced, and the time of day that it is produced, as well as corollary values, such as mitigating environmental impacts and stabilizing the voltage of the distribution system.)

Question: How important is it to you to have choices in your use of electricity? What programs or techniques would most likely be of interest to you? How would you prefer to pay the initial costs of installation of a new technology? Would you prefer subsidies to rates based on performance?

7. Background: An integrated electricity system requires that all aspects of generation, transmission, and distribution be incorporated into a comprehensive, long-term plan. With the hybrid (regulated/non-regulated) system,



statewide integrated planning seems to be evolving, though not all of the energy service providers are interested in participating.

Question: What measures should be undertaken to achieve integration: executive order, regulatory review, permitting and licensing requirements, etc.? Do you feel that municipal utilities and independent energy service providers should not be required to participate in a statewide integrated planning process?

8. Background: Efficiency is now accepted as an energy resource (producing “negawatts”)—in fact, energy-not-needed is the least-cost source of new supply. To facilitate planning and to assure adequate supplies, natural gas and other traditional fuel sources can be bought with long-term contracts.

Question: How can long-term contracts for resources be used to assure achievement of a certain level of energy efficiency over the long term, so that “negawatts” can be built into a long-term resource-adequacy program?

9. Background: Regulation and rate making for the electricity industry is the responsibility of the CPUC. It is an enormously complex process, in which adjudication plays a major role. As a result, expert, and expensive, legal counsel is required for the public to participate, and it takes months to arrive at decisions.

Question: Would regulation and rate making be just as well accomplished through public workshops and discussion?

10. Background: Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed that state agencies with roles and responsibilities for energy planning and permitting, operational coordination, and rates and rulemaking be consolidated into a single state Department of Energy. The roles of the current agencies are diverse and depend upon a range of competencies and experience. In the case of the Energy Commission, planning and analysis is the major responsibility. For the CPUC, their rulemakings and rate-setting are largely adjudicatory proceedings. The California Independent System Operator (CAISO) is largely a technical operational entity, with a further role in protecting Californians against future market manipulation. Over the past three years, the existing agencies have instituted a collaborative process that has become manifest in the Energy Action Plan and is leading to a more rational process for transmission siting.

Question: Is establishing a California Department of Energy the preferred option, or are there other alternatives for fostering effective state governance?

ACTION COMMITTEE

Again we cry WOLF! ...with no wolf in sight. Last spring, it was expected that both the draft of the Sonoma County General Plan Update and the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit would be available in



late summer. The news each month this fall was that each document would be released soon.

The November 15 Action Committee meeting focused on the Sonoma County GPU and discussed plans for commenting on that document. The December 20 Action Committee meeting is scheduled to focus on the SMART Draft EIR. By January 17, it is possible that both documents will be available and we will have plenty to do preparing comments and action on them.

The Action Committee meets from 10 AM to noon in the LWVSC office on the third Tuesday of each month. Let me know if you want to help the LWVSC take action on these documents, or on another issue that interests you.

Willard Richards
action@lwwsonoma.org

SMART NEWS

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit is available!

It is available on the SMART website and on CDs. The League has ordered a paper copy to circulate among people who prefer that format. Contact George Ellman or me if you are interested in helping to read and comment on the draft.



Willard Richards
action@lwwsonoma.org

UPDATE FROM LWV BAY AREA

Housing on the Regional Agenda



The Association of Bay Area Regional Governments' (ABAG) Fall General Assembly focused on "Affordable Housing: Myths and Reality." ABAG has information on many housing issues—links are available through

<http://www.abag.ca.gov> under Regional Housing Programs.



Housing Supply/Affordable Housing – The Bay Area is about the most expensive housing market in the nation. Homebuilders mentioned as causes the cost of land, development impact fees that exceed the "nexus" requirements, long timeframes to receive approvals, and litigation (especially the construction defect liability for condominiums).

To build affordable housing in California, each project must use multiple funding sources, ranging from redevelopment set-aside funds, CDBG, commercial linkage fees, and inclusionary ordinances.

It helps to identify "real sites" in the Housing Element and then pre-zone, using an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone (AHOZ). Prop. 46 State Housing Bonds will be mostly spent in the near future, and additional money will be needed.

ABAG's Regional Task Force to End Homelessness – Mayor Tom Bates, Berkeley, reported on the new task force that intends to fully document the extent of homelessness in the Bay Area, and to utilize Prop. 63 Mental Health funds to do the research and provide services.

Corridor planning to improve the transportation land-use connections.

The deadline for the adoption of **local Housing Element updates** has been extended for two years until June 30, 2009. Details were made available in correspondence in the Assembly packet.

Please refer to the ABAG website or contact Gillian Adams, gilliana@abag.ca.gov for more information.

Linda Craig, President
LWVBA
President@lwvba-ca.org

BOARD BRIEFS

November 1, 2005

- Treasurer Susannah Likins reported that the total expenses for the month of October were \$4,397.48 which included 3rd quarter per member payment (PMP) to State (\$1,010.63) and 3rd and 4th quarter PMP to National (\$2,210.75).

Checking Account balance: \$2,312.79
Education Fund balance: \$1,202.65
T. Rowe Price balance: \$10,886.27

- President Carol Ann Fontana-Cary announced that Sue Beittel, one of the promoters of the Marin/Sonoma LWV Transportation & Land Use Conference of ten years ago, wants to have another such conference in May. The focus of this conference will center on housing and transportation and an analysis of what has been accomplished since 1996. We are being asked to offer our support. It was noted that such a conference has great importance now since our community is building a rail station and developing housing and business opportunities. George Ellman offered to contact the parties and find out when the steering committee meets.
- Susan Milstein reported that public service announcements to be published in *La Voz* would cost \$20 each. After discussion, it was decided to use *La Voz* no more than twice each year in order to reach Spanish-speaking voters.
- The Energy Committee, chaired by Phyllis Stanley, is working on a presentation in January. They are studying the State Guide and will meet November 3. For those interested, the State Guide can be downloaded from the website, <http://www.lwvca.org/>.
- Rosalie Gillmore informed us that the Petaluma Community Access channel required a membership fee before broadcasting our videos of forums, etc. The board agreed to pay the annual membership fee (up to \$100). **Willard/Rosalie**
- After some discussion, the board decided to have 2 mailings instead of a single Dec./Jan. VOTER. The January VOTER would be a supplemental mailing to include time-sensitive items. **Willard/Susan**

Respectfully submitted,
Chlele Gummer

NEW LOCAL MEMBER

Andrea English

NEW NATIONAL MEMBERS

Kristina Boudreaux

Amy Huot

Nancy Kaufman

Marilyn Shaw

For privacy considerations, members' addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses are not provided in the web version of the VOTER

**Join the Gang –
Become a member of the
Charles M. Schulz Museum**



We have a world-class museum as an attraction in our county. Memberships are important to sustain the museum, and every membership level rewards YOU!

Call Maite @ 579-4452 ext. 108
or visit the Museum web site:
www.SchulzMuseum.org
Click on Membership.



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League of Women Voters® of Sonoma County Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

Fax _____ Email _____

I am interested in the following areas:

Program _____ Membership _____

Speakers Bureau _____ Social Policy _____

Natural Resources _____ Voters Service _____

Newsletter _____ Fundraising _____

Cable TV _____ Smart Voter _____

Community Outreach _____ Website _____

Yes, I want to join the League of Women Voters. Enclosed is my check for dues. (\$50.00 for individual annual membership, \$75.00 for household, and \$37.00 for limited income. The membership year is July 1 to June 30.) Please mail check to LWV Sonoma County, 100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Thank you.

DECEMBER 2005/JANUARY 2006 CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.

Date	Time	Place	Description
Sunday December 4	2:00 - 5:00 PM	Home of Anita and William Cedar 3251 Cobblestone Drive Santa Rosa	Holiday Social and Silent Auction Fundraiser See p. 1.
Tuesday December 6	10:00 AM - 12 Noon	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Board Meeting League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Wednesday December 7	7:00 PM	Spring Lake Village Auditorium 5555 Montgomery Drive Santa Rosa	United Nations Association, Sonoma County Branch Population & the Environment: The Impact of Withholding Funds from the UN's Population Program. See p. 3.
Tuesday December 20	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee Review SMART DEIR. See p. 5.
Tuesday January 3	10:00 AM - 12 Noon	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Board Meeting League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Thursday January 12	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Voters Service Meeting
Tuesday January 17	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee Prepare comments on SMART DEIR. See p. 5.
Thursday January 19	10:30 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Book Club Organizational meeting. See p. 2.
Friday January 27		Unitarian Church Oakland, CA	Bay Area League Day State of the Bay: Restoration and Access See http://www.lwba-ca.org for details.
Saturday January 28	10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Rincon Valley Library 6959 Montecito Blvd. Santa Rosa	Energy Update meeting See p. 2.

LINK TO CURRENT CALENDAR