



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 9, No. 5

June 2004

ANNUAL MEETING 2004

Saturday, June 5, 2004

**Canine Companions for Independence Training Center
2965 Dutton Avenue, Santa Rosa**

Registration	9:45 AM
Business Meeting	10:00 AM
Potluck Lunch	Noon
Program	12:45 PM

Coffee, etc. will be served before the meeting.

- ❖ Bring a salad to share for the potluck lunch.
- ❖ Bring the May issue of your VOTER which contains the annual meeting kit and budget.

Program:

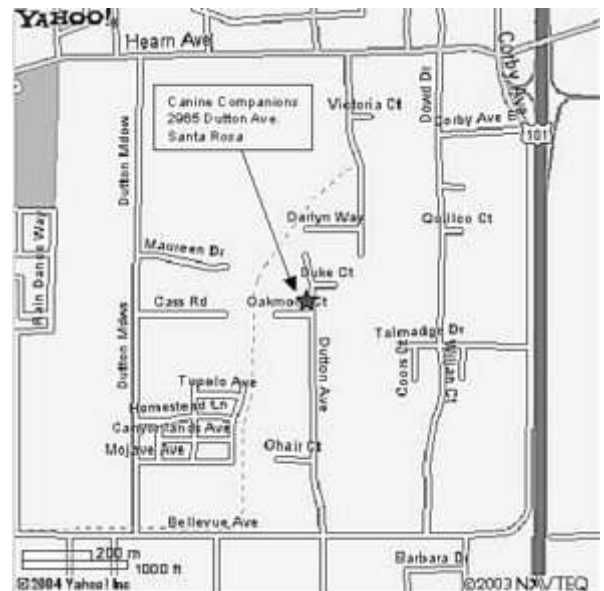
League Makes a Difference – Past and Future

Speakers:

**Kay McCabe, Willard Richards, and other League Members
Ann DuBay, Editorial Staff, Press Democrat**

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Directions

Southbound Highway 101

- Take Hearn Ave. exit.
- Stay on the left (south) onto Corby Ave. Continue south on Corby Ave. The road will curve to the right (west) and become Bellevue Ave.
- Turn right (north) on Dutton Ave.
- Canine Companions will be on your left.
- Enter the second gate.

Northbound Highway 101

- Take Todd Road exit.
- Stay right as you exit. The road will wrap around and cross over 101 and intersect with Todd Road westbound.
- Head west on Todd Rd. and turn right (north) on Standish Ave., which becomes Dutton as you cross Bellevue Ave.
- Canine Companions will be on your left.
- Enter the second gate.

**The League of Women Voters
of Sonoma County**

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Willard Richards, Voters Service

VOTER Team:

Jack & Marsha Dupre,
VOTER Editors 528-7146
May Huddleston
Lynda Hungerford
Caroline Ramberg

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
STUDY GROUP**

The International Relations study group meets the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 8, 2004 at 12:00 Noon in the Santa Rosa League office. The topic planned for the *Great Decisions* discussion is: "Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Policy. Advances in technology and travel have made the world smaller, but people's understanding of the world is often limited. How can Americans become more engaged in global issues? And how can the U.S. reach citizens in other countries?" Please feel free to bring current material from publications or invite anyone who is knowledgeable about the topic so we can learn more and add to our lively discussion. It is a brown-bag lunch session. All members are welcome.



If you have any questions, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826 or Gillmore_R@msn.com

Rosalie Gillmore

BOOK CLUB CORNER

The League's book club will meet on Thursday, June 17, at 10:30 AM at 87 Greenrock Court, Santa Rosa to discuss Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. All members and guests are welcome.

The word "Machiavellian" derives from *The Prince*. Written as a letter while Machiavelli was in prison, *The Prince* describes what Machiavelli believed a political leader must do to remain in power. It is not a pretty picture. But is it as grim as popular use of the adjective would lead us to believe? More importantly, does *The Prince* portray power accurately?



Machiavelli

Among other things, Machiavelli argues that it is better to be feared than loved, that the key to retaining power is to avoid being hated, and that the short road to revolution is confiscating the property of one's subjects. Where does taxation stop and confiscation begin? What, after all, was our own revolution about?

The Prince is short and readily available in many editions and translations. Some are available in the used book market for less than two dollars.

The book group meets the third Thursday of the month. Books are announced on our website before the VOTER arrives at our door. If you can't make the June meeting but you want to know what we will be reading in July, check the calendar on the LWVSC website at <http://sonco.ca.lwvnet.org>.

Lynda Hungerford

**VOTER TEAM
TAKES SUMMER
VACATION**



This issue will be the last one until September. The article deadline for the September issue is August 10. Consult the web calendar at <http://sonco.ca.lwvnet.org/> for updates on meeting times and locations.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR
ADDED TO 2004-2005 SLATE**

The nominating committee reports that Susan Gorin has been nominated to serve as Chair of the nominating committee for 2004-2005. She will be assisted by Lynn Camhi and Caroline Ramberg.

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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Two years ago when I started my tenure, I read in some "guide" for new presidents that the President's Message should not be a lot of thank-yous for the organization and success of various events by League members. And so, I tried to refrain from doing that in my messages, not because I didn't believe that members should be thanked and congratulated, but because of what the "guide" suggested.



But this month, as I write my last message, I am throwing over the traces. With many League members participating and through their hard work, League has made a difference in Sonoma County. Our League members have presented very timely and information-filled forums, spent many hours contributing to a number of Voters Service activities, spoken out on a number of issues locally and nationally. Past VOTERS have kept you informed of these activities, but not all of the dedicated League members have been recognized.

So, with this last message, while ignoring the "guides," and while hoping that no one has been overlooked, the entire Board says:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR WORK AND DEDICATION.

Carrie Anabo	Claire Golding	Eliza Meyn
Glenice Anderson	Stanley Gold	Margaret Millner
Lars Anderson	Chlele Gummer	Steve Rabinowitsh
Dina Angress	Laurie Hall	Caroline Ramberg
Chuck Aver	Janie Hawker	Joy Reynolds
Ruth Belmont	Paula Hawkes	Alice Richardson
Carole Bennett	Bob Hawthorne	Eve Roberson
Marty Bennett	Liz Hawthorne	Katie Sanchez
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Jean Gilmore	Margo Merck	Susan Warner
Paulene Goddard	Leena Merritt	Nancy Wilkins

Nancy Richards

TOUCHSCREEN VOTING MACHINE UPDATE

There has been much concern expressed in the news media over the problems that were reported in the use of touchscreen voting machines during the March 2004 election. Among the complaints were: no auditable paper record for independent voter verification of the vote cast or to allow for a recount; incorrect programming; lack of adequate security to protect against tampering; and poll workers unable to troubleshoot computer malfunctions.



California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley recently banned Diebold's TSX touchscreen voting machine and decertified all other touchscreen voting systems until additional security measures are met.

After 3 days of public hearings in April in Sacramento on these issues, the Voting Systems and Procedures Panel recommended some changes in how the touchscreen voting machines may be used in the November 2004 election in California. Pursuant to its recommendations, Secretary of State Kevin Shelley took the following actions in order to assure voters that their votes would be accurately recorded and counted:

1. De-certified the touchscreen voting machines unless they met strict security standards and poll workers received specialized training in their use.
2. Provided that all polling places with touchscreen voting machines also offered a paper ballot that voters could use instead, if they chose.

Sonoma County will continue to provide paper ballots with optical scan vote counting in the November 2004 election. However, it will be affected by the above actions when it changes over to touchscreen voting machines, which is expected to occur as early as 2005.

Eve Roberson

THE MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

I went because I was afraid that if there was a march and nobody showed up, that would be the end of reproductive choice for American women. There was, you will recall, very little publicity before the march. My first information came over the Internet, from I don't remember where. There was virtually no paper. For weeks, I fretted over the question, "Would enough people come?"

Come they did.

It was with some relief that I noticed that my plane on Friday was filled with women, that my shuttle from the airport was full, and that every single person on the shuttle was female and there for the march, and this was two days before the march. Still, would there be enough of us to make a statement?

A good part of the adventure was walking to the march on Sunday with a friend. Good because as we approached the Mall from blocks away, we joined a sea of people all headed to the same place, literally and figuratively. No, we all did not have exactly the same goals, but we did share the belief that access to sex education, to birth control, and to medical treatment, including abortion, was something that needed to be preserved for American women, and for women, rich and poor, around the world.

How many marchers were there? I didn't count. According to the *Washington Post*, the District police who had witnessed the Million Man March said that the March for Women's Lives was at least as big as that march, and academics who examined the photographs of the Million Man March estimated 870,000 marchers.

A better part of the adventure was realizing just how diverse the marchers were. There were groups with banners for Catholics for Choice, Republicans for Choice, Hadassah, Planned Parenthood, NOW, Socialists, Libertarians, and, of course, LWVUS and a number of state Leagues. There were men. There was skin of every hue.

And—this is the best part—according to the sponsors, one third of the marchers were under twenty-five years of age. Once again, I didn't count, but, yes there were many, many young people—and I was marching with the League. Let's say the sponsors didn't count right. Let's say that one third, approximately 300,000, were under thirty, instead of twenty-five.

So much for the political apathy of the young. Address the issues that count for them, and they will come.

Lynda Hungerford



LWVSC's Lynda Hungerford is front and center!

LWVC EDUCATION STUDY

At the LWVC Convention last summer, the membership voted to update our state Education Position. The materials will be sent out shortly, and I would love to have a few members help us to review the materials and present the Position to our members in the fall for consensus.

This is a **GREAT OPPORTUNITY** for newer members to understand our study process. So don't be shy, give me a call or send me an e-mail. We hope to start meeting in the late summer.

Susan Gorin

525-8335, gorins @sonic.net

ROSTER CORRECTIONS

Please enter new email addresses for the following members:

Barbara Alderdice
Email: b.alderdice@att.net

Noel Bouck
Email: n-bouck@northwestern.edu

SHARING THE PAIN: A LEAGUE SYMPOSIUM ON STATE FINANCES

This article was adapted from a longer report on the State of the Region symposium, which is available on the LWVBA Website at <http://www.lwvba-ca.org>.

Speakers at a January forum agreed that state and local finance problems will require a bigger fix than the bond measures approved on the March 2 ballot can provide. The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area symposium focused on the ripples created by the state budget deficits, and panelists criticized the system from top to bottom. Keynote speaker Fred Keeley, a former Assemblymember and current Executive Director of the California Planning and Conservation League, set the tone by remarking that "the deficit is not something we can grow our way out of with improvements in the economy -- we need structural change."



Members of the first panel included John Russo; Oakland City Attorney, Keith Carson; Alameda Board of Supervisors, Loni Hancock; California State Assembly, and Betty Yee; Deputy to Board of Equalization member Carole Migden. While each represented a different type of government agency, they found common ground when describing the impacts of a state budget system, which has been reactive rather than planned.

They were followed by a panel focused on the broader statewide picture, led by Peter Schrag, columnist for the *Sacramento Bee*, which included Anne Henderson, past Legislative Chair for the League of Women Voters of California, Fred Silva, Public Policy Institute and Lenny Goldberg, California Tax Reform Association. Throughout both panels, certain themes reappeared.

The state has been balancing the budget at least partially with an ongoing "tax grab". As state budgets have become tighter, property taxes that used to fund local services have been allocated to other uses by the state. Local governments are seeing painful cuts.

"Ballot box budgeting" limits available funds. Initiatives which earmark revenues for certain uses, coupled with constitutional mandates, leave legislators fighting over approximately 2% of the budget.

A majority vote can authorize a tax cut, but the 2/3-vote requirement for passing a state budget or raising taxes makes it easier to cut programs than increase revenues.

Tax credits, also called tax expenditures, can be passed with a majority vote and are seldom re-examined, although they represent millions of dollars of potential revenue each year.

**"We don't even need new revenues, we need our old taxes back again."
Assemblymember Loni Hancock**

California is well behind other states in taxing business services. Yee pointed out that labor charges for auto repairs are taxed by over half the states, but not in California.

Property taxes on commercial and industrial property rise very slowly because of Proposition 13 limits, since this type of property changes hands less frequently than residential property and some transfers are invisible to the tax system.

Spending isn't matching growth rates, putting the state behind the curve. Cutting programs when population is growing doubles the impact.

In the long run, the state will have to "raise taxes, make service cuts, borrow dollars," as Carson put it. Panelists generally agreed on some strategies.

- Increase the upper bracket income tax. This is a strategy that was used by Governor Pete Wilson with some success.
- Review tax credits. Yee suggested creating a Tax Expenditure annual report, to allow tax credits to be scrutinized each year.
- Broaden sales tax to apply to selected business services.
- Restructure the general fund sources to make allocation of revenues from personal and property tax more logical and create a guaranteed revenue source for local government.
- Split the tax rolls to create different property tax rules for commercial/industrial property and residential property.
- Re-examine budget mandates created by statute and initiative.
- Talk about trade-offs and priorities in the budget.
- Eliminate 2/3 votes for budget and taxes and return to "majority rule" like most other states.

- When raising taxes, show a good reason why the money is needed.

Panel members pointed to Proposition 13 as the source of some of the structural problems, including the 2/3 vote, the inequalities in taxing commercial and industrial property like residential property, and the ability of the state to allocate property tax that used to go to local government. It seems possible that the state's dire financial situation may mean that Proposition 13 is no longer untouchable. Several speakers also alluded to new ballot measures circulating or already scheduled for the November election, including one sponsored by the League of California Cities. The more distant future for state finances remains murky despite the best efforts of the collected experts present at the January forum.

Leslie Stewart, Editor
Bay Area Monitor

BOARD BRIEFS

The following key items were covered at our May 4, 2004 board meeting:

- Recommended that at the Annual Meeting members be asked to raise dues to \$50 for single members, \$75 for households, and \$37 for members with limited incomes. This raise will cover increases in the per member payment for LWVUS and LWVC. The per-member payment or PMP is the amount that a local League forwards to higher levels of League each year for each member or household. For the 2004-05 year, the LWVUS PMP will increase by 80 cents and the LWVC PMP by \$2.
- Heard a report that May Huddleston will write a brief summary of the water document to be available for distribution by late May. The complete document will be available at a later date on the web, for free, or in hard copy, at a price that will cover printing, postage and handling.
- Voted to have LWVSC included as a member of Northcoast Water Network.
- Learned that plans are in progress for LWVSC to organize a forum on the Rohnert Park recall election.
- Revised a Member Interest Survey to be included in membership renewal notices.
- Learned that LWVC will conduct a study on K-12 education beginning this fall.
- Approved League addressing Santa Rosa City Council regarding the final EIR for the Transit Oriented Redevelopment Project Area (TORPA) and requesting that more attention and scrutiny be given to the land use planning for this area.
- Recommended that the Action meetings for June, July and August be devoted, in part, to discussing Voters Service issues.
- Learned that Marsha Dupre spoke to the Sebastopol City Council and Nancy Richards spoke to the County Board of Supervisors in opposition to the proposed Federal Family Marriage Amendment.

Susan Milstein

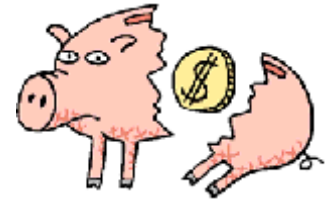
Secretary

DUES INCREASE PROPOSED

A large fraction of the annual dues you pay to the League are sent to the National, State, and Bay Area Leagues to support their activities. These assessments are known as the per-member payment, or PMP. Last year we sent \$23.00 to the National League, \$19.00 to State League, and \$1.00 to the Bay Area League for a total of \$43 for each member. The PMP for households was slightly less.

Two months ago we received notice from the State League that the PMP would increase by \$2.00 if approved by the LWVC Leadership Council. Two weeks

ago we received notice that the National PMP would be raised by 80 cents if approved at the National Convention. If both increases are adopted at the conventions, the total PMP will be \$45.80.



Our Board did not want to increase our dues by as much as the State and National increases; however, we decided that the local League could *not* absorb the total increase. Thus, the Board has recommended an increase in dues for all categories. The recommended increase will set the new dues at \$50 per member, \$75 per household, and \$37 per limited income. This means that we will have \$4.20 per member and slightly more per household member to run the League in Sonoma County for the coming year.

We have worked hard to raise funds this year with a silent auction, a theater party and a fundraising letter sent to the community. We have received donations from League members as well. In the coming year, the Board will continue to try to raise funds and cut corners in order to keep an active and alive League functioning in Sonoma County. We hope that you understand the issue and will support the dues increases recommended by the Board.

Nancy Richards

CELEBRATE REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM!

June 8, 2004

Sacramento Convention Center

9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

- EDUCATE your Legislators
- CAUCUS with Women's Health Advocates from all over California
- PROTECT Adolescent Health
- LEARN about emerging issues



Sponsored by The California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom including the League of Women Voters of California.

For more information contact: Jo Ann Madigan:

Tel. (415) 346-0563

Email: jomadigan@earthlink.net

A TOWN HALL MEETING ON THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

DATE: Wednesday, June 2, 2004
 TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 PM
 PLACE: First United Methodist Church
 The McMullin Room
 1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

Sponsored by:

The United Nations Association of the United States of America and the Business Council for the United Nations, Sonoma County Chapter



Panel:

Gus Feissel - Veteran international civil servant and diplomat who has served as UN Assistant Secretary-General and as Chief of UN peacekeeping in Cyprus.

Bob Abramson - Former staff member of two UN specialized agencies, the World Bank and International Labor Organization, and consultant on management with other UN bodies.

Bob Brown - Retired Professor of History at Sonoma State University and an expert on the history and work of the United Nations and its various agencies.

How the town hall meeting will function:

Attendees at the Meeting will have the opportunity to:

1. View a new video (25 min.) on the United Nations and UNA-USA: *Partners for a Better World*.
2. Direct questions to the expert panel and learn more about the UN system and how it operates.
3. Express and exchange their views about the UN and critical global issues.

Admission is free. Members, guests and the public are invited to this participative event. Light refreshments will be served before the program begins.

For more information, please call Bob Abramson at (707) 664-8065.

Note: LWVSC is a sponsor of the UNA, Sonoma County Chapter.

2004 ELECTION IS IN DANGER

WASHINGTON, DC -- Kay J. Maxwell, president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, testified at the first public hearing of the Election Assistance Commission on May 5, 2004, in Washington, DC.

"The immediate issue facing this Commission, and our Nation, is the 2004 general election," stated Maxwell. "We cannot afford to have a replay of 2000, when voting systems failed to properly record voters' intent, when purging and other election practices undermined voter participation, and when millions of Americans questioned the outcome and legitimacy of the presidential election," she added.

"The 2004 election is in danger. Most Americans will vote on the same machines they did in 2000. Reforms to ensure proper and accurate voter registration rolls are far from complete. Citizens are concerned about the security of voting systems, access to the vote, and the counting of votes. We call on the Election Assistance Commission to set operational and management safeguards in the form of best practices for the 2004 election," she said.

"It is vital that the controversy over election practices not scare voters away from the polls in 2004," Maxwell said. "We must always encourage people to vote, while we work to improve voter access and to ensure that every vote will count," stated Maxwell.

"Specific security measures are needed for each significant type of voting machine that Americans will use in 2004," Maxwell said. "Punch cards will be used by approximately 20 percent of the voters; lever machines by about 15 percent; optical scan machines by about 30 percent, and electronic systems by about 30 percent. Each type of system raises particular security and access concerns that must be addressed," she added.

"The League believes that Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting systems can be an important part of election reform efforts. As part of a well-managed election system, DREs have strong public support, improve access and reduce errors in casting and counting the vote," noted Maxwell.

"The League takes quite seriously the questions raised about DRE security, and the management and operational practices that affect DRE performance in the real world. It is vitally important to ensure that DRE systems, as well as other systems, are properly managed," she said. "Some have proposed a particular solution – the so-called voter-verified paper trail (VVPT). There are many questions to be answered before we go down the VVPT route. After careful examination of these questions, the League has not been persuaded of the wisdom of the voter-verified paper trail for 2004," Maxwell said.

LWVUS President Maxwell's complete testimony and remarks, as delivered, are available on the League's website at <http://www.lwv.org/>.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!


We appreciate the donations to our annual spring fund drive from the following individuals and companies:

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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. (\$49.00 for individual annual membership, \$70.00 for household, and \$35.00 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.

Dues may change for 2004 –2005. See article on p. 6.

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2004 CALENDAR

[Click here for the latest calendar.](#)