



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 11, No. 6

June 2006

ANNUAL MEETING 2006

Saturday, June 3

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

Registration	10:00 AM
Business Meeting	10:15 AM
Potluck Lunch	Noon
Program	12:30 PM

Coffee, etc. will be served before the meeting.

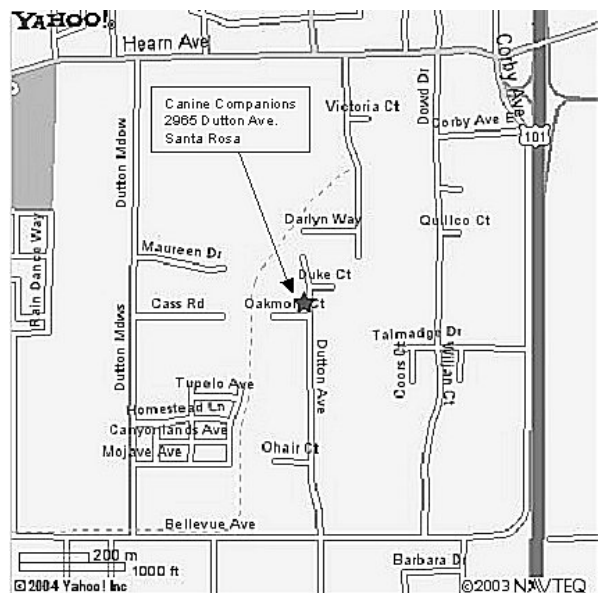
- Bring a dessert or salad to share for the potluck lunch.
- Bring the May issue of your VOTER which contains the annual meeting kit.

Program: "Promoting Youth Success: What the community can do to reduce high-risk behaviors among youth."

Speaker: Lynn Garric (Please see biography on p. 3.)

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

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Laurie Hall & Susan Milstein, Public Relations
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Rosalie Gillmore & Amy Southwick, Voters
Service

VOTER Team:

Jack Dupre, VOTER Editor
Marsha Vas Dupre
May Huddleston
Betty Keefauver
Caroline Ramberg
Nancy Richards

BOOK CLUB CORNER

Other folks may be taking a break this summer, but not the League book group. We are just having too much fun. Join us for a lively discussion during the next three months, and don't forget to bring a bookish friend. We meet on the third Thursday of every month from 10:30 AM until NOON. During the summer, we will meet in the League office, 100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa.

The book for June will be Asene Seierstad's *The Book-seller of Kabul*; for July Sarah Erdman's *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village*; and for August Micheline Maynard's *The End of Detroit: How the Big Three Lost Their Grip on the American Car Market*. We are nothing if not eclectic.

If you have questions about the Book Group, please call 539-5770 or send me an email.

Lynda Hungerford

info@lwvsonoma.org

BE A SMART VOTER

If you haven't voted yet, then it is time to buckle down to looking at your ballot and deciding just which rectangles you want to fill in.



Have you ever arrived at Election Day, looked at the names of the candidates for a state or local office, and then wondered who they were and what they stood for?

No more. The single most comprehensive source for election information is the League's own Smart Voter at <http://smartvoter.org>. You can put in your address and zip code, and you will see exactly the contests that will be printed on your ballot. I promise that your address will be used **only** to pull up your ballot. You will also find a wealth of information on the candidates and ballot measures that you see there.

I can't promise that you will find information on every candidate for every office. There are candidates who neither submit a ballot statement nor participate in Smart Voter. Perhaps that in itself tells you something about them.

In any case, we are batting a thousand in the Democratic contest for Assembly District 6, and as I write three of the four candidates for the County Board are participating. In addition, it is possible to stream video of League debates from some contest pages, including the contests for the Democratic nomination in the 6th Congressional District, the Democratic and Republican contests for nomination for the 6th Assembly District, and the contest for County Supervisor of in the 2nd District.

I know that League members do not need to be reminded to vote. But just maybe some of you need a nudge to go to Smart Voter. That's <http://smartvoter.org/>.

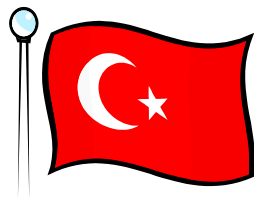
Lynda Hungerford

Sonoma County Smart Voter Coordinator
info@www.lwvsonoma.org

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY GROUP

The International Relations discussion group will meet on Tuesday, June 13, at 12 NOON in the Santa Rosa League office. It is a brown-bag lunch session.

The topic for discussion will be "**Turkey**. Turkey has long sought membership in the European Union. Roadblocks remain, as several European countries are wary of Turkey's candidacy. Could Turkey's membership in the EU help



Western relations with the Islamic world? Or could the possible rejection of Turkey cause an even wider divide?"

Our discussion group will take a summer recess in July and August. The group will meet again in September and information about the September meeting will appear in the September VOTER. The group meets the second Tuesday of the month. The topics are selected from the *Great Decisions* briefing book published by the Foreign Policy Association in New York City. All members and friends are welcome to join the group discussion, with or without the briefing book. We also refer to the most current news items and articles pertaining to the discussion topic.

If anyone has a question about the group, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826.

Rosalie Gillmore

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Amy Southwick, Will Richards, George Ellman and I attended the state Leadership Council in Sacramento. Several issues our national president, Kay Maxwell, talked about at the meeting were the efforts at the national level on redistricting and reauthorization of the voting rights bill. Also, the National Board will recommend concurrence with the LWV Illinois Death Penalty Abolition Position and a new, three-year study of Immigration Policy. These activities will require an increase in our Per Member Payment (PMP) if they are approved at the convention in June. Details about these items can be found at <http://www.lwv.org/>. Please visit the site.



At the state level, Jackie Jacobberger, our president, expressed our concern regarding the statewide voter registration list. The Secretary of State is instituting new database matching rules to eliminate some 30% of the rejected registrations. See p. 4 for an update. It would be a very good idea to join *LWVCNews*. This is a free one-way information listserve. The LWVC Education Fund will use it to send various types of information, such as action alerts, workshop information, trainings, voter service activities and time sensitive messages. Send an email to LWVCNews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Finally, during the summer our meeting schedules change a bit so it is important to keep an eye on our local calendar, which can be found at <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/>.

Have a great summer!

Carol Ann Fontana-Cary

NEW HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION ELECTION LAWS PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LEAGUE

If you are a member of a homeowners association, or any other common interest development, a new law scheduled to take effect on July 1 will affect you. This law requires, among other things, that elections be held by secret ballot, that an independent third party be an inspector of the elections, and that ballots be counted and tabulated by the inspector of elections in public at a noticed meeting. The law places restrictions on the use of association funds for campaigns.

Legislation is now being considered that would modify this new law, hopefully to improve it. If no major changes are made, this law creates an opportunity for lawyers and others to serve as independent third parties. This opportunity was the subject of a workshop at the recent League of Women Voters of California Leadership Council.

Who better to run elections than the League of Women Voters? While we may not charge the same rates as

ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKER, LYNN GARRIC, HEADS SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Lynn is a native of Sonoma Valley and has worked with Sonoma County youth since 1972. She has a Master's Degree in Counseling and is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and also a credentialed School Administrator. She is the Safe Schools Project Director for the Sonoma County Office of Education, and has been in that position



for 9 years. Prior to that, she worked for 15 years for the Drug Abuse Alternatives Center as the Clinical Director and then Executive Director. She works with all the districts and schools in Sonoma County, helping to design and implement their drug, alcohol, tobacco and violence prevention programs, and offers training in safe school plans, crisis response and bullying prevention. She also works for Humboldt County Office of Education, and is the Regional Safe Schools Coordinator for Region 1 (Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, Lake and Del Norte counties).

She will speak on "**Promoting Youth Success: What the community can do to reduce high-risk behaviors among youth.**" She'll go over the latest local statistics from the California Healthy Kids Survey and discuss the opportunities and support that kids need from their schools and communities.

attorneys, this is a real opportunity to earn money for the League and perhaps have a little fun doing it. There were League members present at the workshop who had been running such elections, and the rates charged by those present ranged from \$16 to \$50 per hour. The people running the workshop emphasized that it is important to charge for ALL the time required to do the work.

I have the information kit that was handed out at the workshop and can make copies for anyone interested in doing this. To learn more about the details of the new law, go to <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/> and look up SB 61 and AB 1098.

If you are a member of a homeowners association, tell your board about this law and ask if they are interested in having the League serve as the independent third party.

Willard Richards

Action Chair
action@lwvsonoma.org

CALIFORNIA'S VOTER REGISTRATION PROBLEM

LWVC has stressed that a failure to match is *not* evidence that a person is ineligible to vote.

Eve Roberson, in the May VOTER, described the problem with the voter registration database. Before a new or re-registering voter is added to the statewide *CalVoter* database, a search of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) database must now be performed in an attempt to verify the information given on their registration form. This requirement of the *Help America Vote Act* (HAVA) went into effect January 1. Statewide, an estimated 25 percent of registrations since the first of the year resulted in rejection by the database matching procedure. In a letter to the Secretary of State posted at http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/letters/mcpherson_2006mar.html, the LWVC expressed concerns and stressed that a failure to match is not evidence that a person is ineligible to vote.

League representatives have worked intensely with the Secretary of State, county elections officials, and legislators to address the database matching problems and are pleased that our efforts have borne fruit. Changes in procedure that are being instituted by the Secretary of State appear to resolve the situation for the great majority of registrations. We will continue to monitor the situation, and we intend to ensure that HAVA presents an opportunity for better registration list management, not a way to disenfranchise voters.

Local Leagues should publicize the need to supply a California driver's license (or state ID) number when registering or re-registering to change one's address, name or party. If a voter has no driver's license or ID number, the last four digits of his or her social security number must be given. Providing identification when registering will keep voters from being deterred by the verification system.

ADVOCATES MOBILIZE TO MOVE SB 840 (KUEHL) TO GOVERNOR'S DESK

Years of pushing forward through health care studies and prior single-payer legislation have led to SB 840 (Kuehl) that provides for universal health insurance for Californians. Initiated by *Health Care for All California* (HCA), this bill with 39 coauthors has passed the Senate and the Assembly Health Committee, and now is poised to pass in the Assembly. The issue of universal single-payer health care is in the public view and is a top priority for the people of California. Throughout this long-time effort, the League of Women Voters of California has supported HCA's efforts including every legislative attempt to achieve universal, single-payer health care.

Now is the time to escalate this effort and build support by creating a massive grassroots movement. The LWVC

has endorsed HCA's *OneCareNow* campaign for passage of SB 840 and urges Leagues to increase their effort to help pass the bill. The campaign defines, in simple terms, a unique California vision for single-payer health care. "OneCareNow" means one plan, now. It means one standard of high quality care for all. It means everyone will be in one risk pool and covered by one insurance fund.

The campaign's organizational framework for building the movement into a major political force is the statewide petition drive and 365-city campaign. The petition drive is spreading across the state and can be accessed at <http://OneCareNow.org/>. Its growth will accelerate quickly as advocates and petition signers spread the word about this viable solution to the health care crisis.

The central idea of the 365-city campaign is simple. Starting August 12, there will be an activity held every day for a year in a different town or city that will focus on education and advocacy for universal health care insurance. Activists will reach out to local governments, schools, officials, officeholders and others to grow the support. These activities will begin in small towns and culminate 365 days later in the largest city, Los Angeles, on August 12, 2007. A week later, on August 19, people from these 365 cities and throughout the state will hold a huge rally in Sacramento to call for universal health insurance.

Other organizations also are gearing up to work for SB 840. The California Nurses Association is now a sponsoring organization. Others such as the California Physicians Alliance, California Teachers Association, California School Employees Association, Latino Issues Forum and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of California have indicated that passing SB 840 is a top priority. Others will join and involve their members in the campaign.

The campaign, and at this time especially the petition drive, is critical to building the momentum to get SB 840 to the governor's desk this year. SB 840 will require a simple majority to pass. Intense support from constituents will move the Assembly to pass the bill. The LWVC urges Leagues to participate in the campaign at the highest level possible for their members.

Passage of SB 840 will pave the way for final enactment of universal health insurance. The campaign will continue to work for passage of SB 1784 (Kuehl), a companion bill for SB 840 introduced this year to provide the funding mechanism for the state's new universal insurance fund. Senator Kuehl and other legislators are working to define the complex details that must be added before this bill can move forward. SB 1784 will require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Working closely with HCA, the LWVC's eight health care committee members are well informed on the issues. Each member has been assigned as a resource person for about nine Leagues. All League presidents will soon receive more information to provide to interested members.

For more information, please contact Barbara Storey, Program Director for Health Care, at 619-231-8231 or bs_lwv004@cox.net.

ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Redistricting

There is still a reasonable chance that the California Legislature will pass SCA 3 this year to create an Independent Redistricting Commission. If approved by the people, this constitutional amendment would end the ability of legislators to draw their own district boundaries to create safe seats in the State Senate and Assembly.

Voters rejected Proposition 77 last year because it would have given redistricting authority to a panel of three retired judges and did not include adequate diversity of input and public oversight. Results from a recent California Common Cause poll:

- 66% of California voters prefer having redistricting conducted by an independent redistricting commission instead of the state legislature.
- Voters who opposed Proposition 77 last fall prefer redistricting by an independent commission over redistricting by the legislature, by a 53% to 31% margin.
- 86% of California voters want an open process and an end to backroom deals in redistricting.
- 81% of California voters want a redistricting process that keeps their neighborhoods together; 78% want a process that keeps their cities together as much as possible.

SCA 3 is still working its way through committee hearings and is subject to amendment. As of now, the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) would follow these procedures:

1. IRC Selection Panel formed. People apply. The Judicial Council creates an IRC Selection Panel of 10 retired judges. Applicants for the IRC submit their names to be considered.
2. Applicants screened. The selection panel screens the applicants for conflicts of interest (no electeds; no lobbyists; no employees, relatives, of electeds). The Selection Panel will nominate people to create a 25-member pool containing 10 Democrats, 10 Republicans, and 5 who are not registered in either major party, and that is balanced by gender, ethnicity, region, and relevant expertise.
3. State lawmakers provide input. Legislative leaders (Senate President Pro Tem, Senate Minority Leader, Assembly Speaker, and Assembly Minority Leader) pick 8 names from pool (4 Democrats, 4 Republicans). These are 8 of the 11 members of the IRC.
4. Eleven-person IRC is created. The 8 Commissioners selected in step 3 choose the last 3 Commissioners, who are not registered with either major party from the pre-screened pool of nominees. One of the independents will serve as the Commission Chair.

The IRC must draw the districts following these criteria in this order:

1. Equal population
2. Voting Rights Act

3. Geographic Contiguity
4. Communities of Interest
5. City and County Boundaries
6. Compactness

Assembly districts will be nested in Senate districts, which will be nested in Board of Equalization Districts.

SCA 3 contains the following procedures for hearings and voting:

1. The IRC must hold public hearings around the state. The Bagley-Keene Act on public meetings applies. 14-day notice for each hearing must be provided.
2. Off-the-record meetings with legislators or people with conflicts of interest are prohibited.
3. Six of 11 IRC members must vote in favor of a map to approve it.
4. Redistricting is done once a decade after the release of the new Census data.

Lobbying for SCA 3 is one of the LWV California's top lobbying priorities. The measure is also supported by California Common Cause, Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), AARP, State Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO and many others. If you favor this redistricting plan, let your Senator and Assembly Member know.

Willard Richards

Action Chair

SMART NEWS

Decisions on two separate issues related to the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit will be made during



the next month. On Wednesday, June 21, the SMART Board will meet from 1:30 to 3:00 PM in the Sonoma County Supervisors Chambers. The Board is scheduled to make the final decision on the selection of the development team for the SMART property in Railroad Square in Santa Rosa. The monthly meeting of the Action Committee will be the previous day, 10:00 AM on Tuesday, June 20, in the LWVSC office. At the Action Committee meeting, we will discuss the current status of the developer selection process and whether the League wishes to make a statement to the SMART Board.

The other SMART issue is the November ballot measure. There is a chance that by the time you read this, the SMART Board will have approved the revised financial plan for the start-up of commuter rail service. Once that financial plan is released, the Marin and Sonoma County Leagues will work to reach a consensus on a position on the SMART ballot measure. The final decision will be made at a joint meeting of members of both Leagues. If that decision is still pending on June 20, the pros and cons of the ballot measure will be discussed at the Action Committee meeting.

Willard Richards

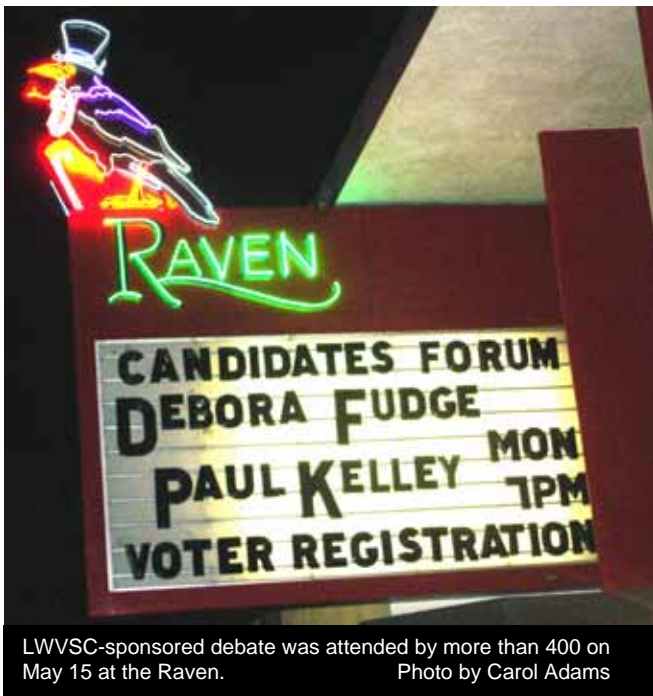
Action Chair

NEWS FROM VOTERS SERVICE

The June primary will be around the corner by the time you receive this VOTER and many will have voted by absentee ballot. The Voters Service team was busy sponsoring and co-sponsoring debates, giving a *Pros and Cons* training session and distributing *Pros and Cons* and *Easy Voter Guides*.

The League of Women Voters of Sonoma County sponsored or co-sponsored five debates:

- County Supervisor, District 2 between Mike Kerns and Mervis Reissig
- County Supervisor, District 4 between Paul Kelley and Debora Fudge
- CA State Assembly, District 6 among Democrats John Alden, Damon Connolly, Alex Easton-Brown, Jared Hoffman, Cynthia L. Murray and Pamela Torliatt
- Congressional District 6 between Republicans Todd Hooper and Mike Halliwell
- Congressional District 6 between Democrats Lynn Woolsey and Joe Nation



Railey Album, Carole Bennett, Lynn Camhi, Rosalie Gillmore, Lynda Hungerford, Liz and Bob Hawthorne, Nancy and Willard Richards, Amy Southwick and many others worked diligently to put on a splendid service for voters with these debates.

Chlele Gummer, *Pros and Cons* coordinator, conducted an excellent training session on May 4th that will be useful to members in future elections.

Eve Roberson kept us abreast of the federal mandate that requires Secretaries of State to maintain a statewide voter registration database. Some improvements have been made in the application of matching criteria, but some legitimate voters will still be rejected. LWVC is monitoring this situation closely. See the update on p. 4.

Finally, *Smart Voter* continues to be an integral part of our service to voters. See the article on p. 2.

Carol Adams, Voter Outreach coordinator, will head up an effort to register 18-year-olds in the fall. A meeting will be held in August to prepare for this project. Call Carol if you are interested in working on this project. Carol also needs help to distribute voter registration forms.

The Voters Service committee will **not** meet in June or July. The next Voters Service meeting will be Thursday, August 24, at 10:00 AM in the Santa Rosa League office.

Amy Southwick and Rosalie Gillmore

BOARD BRIEFS

May 2, 2006

- President Corol Ann reported that the Smart Voter website can be reached from the League of Women Voters United States Web Page. She announced that the Friends of the County Grand Jury gave our League a donation of \$400.00 because we share the same vision. This amount will go to our Education Fund.

Program

- Speaker for the annual meeting will be Lynn Garric from the Sonoma County Office of Education.

Action

- Three televised debates with Marin LWV have been held and copies ordered for local stations to re-broadcast and for viewing on the Smart Voter website. Future debates are May 2 in Petaluma, the County Supervisorial District 2, and May 15 in Healdsburg, County Supervisorial District 4
- Easy Voter Guides are available in Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish at the League office. Pros and Cons are also stored there.
- Susan Milstein, Lynda Hungerford and Amy Southwick visited the editor of *LaVoz*, Craig Davis, to encourage the downloading and printing of the Easy Voter Guide.
- LWVC is monitoring the simplification of the state single voter database. Some problems still exist and some legitimate voters may still be rejected.
- For the November election, Carol Adams will head up an effort to reach 18 year olds in high schools. Carol has been asked to report on this project at the annual meeting.

Transportation and Land Use

- George Ellman reported that the amended SMART DEIR hasn't yet been published. On May 12, the SMART Ad Hoc Selection Committee will give analyses of each proposal including the cost of additional parking and the economics surrounding the Food and Wine Center. On May 24, they will decide on which of the three proposals they will recommend.

(continued on p. 7)

Board Briefs continued from p. 6

Action

- The three meetings of the SMART Ad Hoc Selection Committee are being broadcast live and recorded by the Santa Rosa Community Media Center. Willard Richards is now the League contact person for the Media Center and makes all the arrangements for these broadcasts. Rosalie Gillmore is the contact person for Petaluma Community Access.

Chlele Gummer

Secretary

VOTER TEAM TAKES SUMMER VACATION

This issue of the VOTER 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.





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 Become a volunteer.

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 To Volunteer call Kristi @ 579-4452 ext. 116

or visit www.SchulzMuseum.org
 click on "Membership" or "Volunteers"



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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.

JUNE 2006 CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.

Date	Time	Place	Description
Saturday June 3	10:00 AM - 1:30 PM	Canine Companions for Independence 295 Dutton Avenue Santa Rosa	Annual Meeting See pp. 1 and 3.
Thursday June 15	10:30 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Book Club Asene Seierstad's <i>The Bookseller of Kabul</i> <i>See p. 2.</i>
Tuesday June 20	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee

**For July and August, please consult the web calendar -
<http://www.lwvsonoma.org/> for meeting times and locations.**