



THE VOTER





THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 9, No. 8

November 2004

MAKE SURE YOUR VOICE IS HEARD ON ELECTION DAY – VOTE!

The League Recommends:

-  Yes on proposition 59
-  No on Proposition 69
-  Yes on Proposition 72
-  Yes on Measure M



A BUSY MONTH FOR ELECTION FORUMS See Voters Service Report on p. 4



Photo by Craig Scheiner

Betty Ann Bruno moderates 7th Assembly District Forum on Oct. 8.



HOLIDAY PARTY ON DECEMBER 5TH



Good cheer! Fine food and drink! A chance to share some time with your fellow League members and guests in a beautiful Sonoma home! All this, plus a Silent Auction to tempt you! Seems a perfect way to spend a December afternoon, doesn't it?

So, be sure to mark your calendar and plan to join us for this delightful opportunity to relax before we all need to rev-up and face the hectic holidays.

Prospective new members and guests are welcome!

When: Sunday, December 5th, 3:00 – 6:00 PM
Where: The home of Eliza Meyn
19452 Goin Lane
Sonoma

What to Bring: Please bring either an hors d'oeuvre or a 'sweet treat' to share.
Beverages will be provided.

Questions: Call Sandy Benson, 763-1629.

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of Sonoma County**

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MEMBER PROFILE

Rosalie Gillmore

Coordinating Voters Service is a big job in a large, obstreperous county with nine incorporated cities, even when there is no unexpected local recall election only a few months before a presidential election. This summer, the person who took on that job was Rosalie Gillmore.



Photo by Todd Cary

Her preparation for a job that requires superb organizational skills included twenty-five years as a legal secretary and five working for the William G. Irwin Foundation. Her preparation also included a long exposure to League. She joined the Marin League in 1983, transferring her membership to our League when she moved to Petaluma eleven years ago.

When she retired from her professional career, Gillmore called the League office to see if our League had an International Relations Study Group. We didn't then, but we do now because she established one and has chaired it for the past three years.

Thus she became a natural choice for juggling the volunteer efforts of seventy-five people working on spreading the word about 139 local candidates in 42 contests, 14 local ballot measures, and 16 state propositions.

In addition, she is happy to speak out on one of the issues dearest to our League's heart—transportation. Where most of us have only an academic background when it comes to public transit, Gillmore has real experience.

"If you want to know how public transportation in the North Bay works," Gillmore says, "ask me." For eight years she commuted to her work in San Francisco from Petaluma on Golden Gate Transit. She says flatly, "public transportation works." It took, she says, approximately one hour during the morning commute to get from Petaluma to downtown San Francisco's Financial District, and she could use that time to read, a favorite activity for her.

Yet another skill to apply to coordinating Voters Service—multi-tasking.

Gillmore is entering a second retirement this January. She is retiring as Voters Service chair. She did a spectacular job this fall. We shall miss her.

LYNDA HUNGERFORD

BOOK CLUB CORNER

League members and guests are invited to join in a book discussion the third Thursday of every month from 10:30 AM until noon.

The selection for Thursday, November 18, is Robert Reich's *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*. Reich is the author of ten books and on the faculty of three of the nation's most prestigious universities. Of himself he says, "As an adult, I've been teaching and writing about the economy and government—that is, about wealth and power. I've also had the honor of serving under three presidents, most recently in Bill Clinton's cabinet. In these roles I've tried to help people without much money get better jobs, and also tried to stop some corporations from abusing their power."



Robert Reich

Join us to discuss Reich's answer to those he calls "Radcons."

LYNDA HUNGERFORD

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the whirlwind surrounding the election cycle comes to an end, we will be settling into a quieter time in League and will have time to reflect on all the efforts we put forth fulfilling our mission statement. Everyone in League can take pride in the activities we have undertaken in the past months. Please take time to read our Voters Service report. There are far too many members to thank for their unfailing efforts to make this election a success in terms of voter participation.



We have some wonderful new appointments to our off-board positions. Leena Merritt will be our representative on the Sonoma County Recycling Task Force, Beth Martinez will keep us informed as representative on the Sonoma County UN Association activities, and Linda Curry will represent us on the Russian River Watershed Council. All of these members continue to raise visibility for our League in the community. We extend our thanks to all of them.

Corol Ann Fontana-Cary

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY GROUP

The International Relations study group meets the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 9 at 12:00 noon at 1601 Marylyn Circle, Petaluma. The topic for this month's discussion will be the November 2 election. Need I say more? Join the group and offer your viewpoints. It should be a lively discussion.

It is a brown-bag lunch session. All members are welcome.

The topics for discussion are taken from the *Great Decisions* briefing book published by the Foreign Policy Association. If anyone is interested in ordering a 2005 briefing book, or if you have any questions, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826.

Rosalie Gillmore

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.

THE LEAGUE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Local League action creates positive changes for Santa Rosa City Council elections

It is rewarding to see the fruits of past League actions. All candidates for Santa Rosa City Council now have free space on the City website to present their positions, display contact information, and post links to their website. Also, a booklet with similar information has been mailed to all Santa Rosa households. This website says more information is available on the League's SmartVoter.org website, and has a link. This is a nice advertisement for us.

Two years ago, Santa Rosa voters passed a ballot measure that required revisions in the campaign finance ordinance for City Council elections. Before the City Council began considering these new requirements, a League committee studied the alternatives and prepared a report with background information and recommended actions. This report was also presented to the Editorial Staff of *The Press Democrat*, a subcommittee of the Government Review Council of the Chamber of Commerce, and others. Council actions last year and last month have adopted nearly all of the League's recommendations.

Other cities in California require an additional disclosure statement on Friday before the election listing contributions and expenses through the previous day, and the Council readily accepted the League recommendation to require this in Santa Rosa. The Council also adopted the recommendation that these reports be available on the City website on the Friday of the reporting week. Now, current campaign contribution and expense data are available to everyone the weekend before Election Day.

The League committee knew that the City budgets were being cut, so assumed that the Council would not be willing to provide meaningful monetary support to satisfy the voters' mandate to provide some public financing. Something more innovative was required. The Fremont League published a booklet with a page for each candidate. We determined that the City of Santa Rosa could do this for less than \$10,000. The League recommended that the City provide space for candidates to distribute their message, and the results are in the lead paragraph above. The cost to the City is far less than the value to the candidates. This public financing is a cost-effective way to help level the playing field.

Recently, the City Council adopted the League recommendations that candidates must demonstrate some citizen support and also agree to a voluntary spending limit to qualify for public financing. The many League members who participated in this work can take pride in the outcome.

Willard Richards

VOTERS SERVICE

The members of the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County worked very hard during the 2004 fall election season and it is a tribute to their dedication and professionalism. Well done! You have my deep appreciation and admiration.

The LWVSC conducted, coordinated, moderated, kept time and/or co-sponsored 16 forums; a few were held back-to-back on the same evening. The Santa Rosa forums were coordinated by Caroline Ramberg with assistance from Nancy Richardson, Amy Southwick, Olive Horrell, Nancy Richards, Willard Richards and Alice Richardson. Moderators were Paula Hawkes, Carole Bennett, Betty Ann Bruno and Susan Gorin with the assistance of Marty Bennett.

The two back-to-back Healdsburg forums, with an audience of about 100, were coordinated by Liz Hawthorne assisted by Bob Hawthorne, Nancy and Willard Richards, Marian Jones, timekeeper, Susan Gorin, moderator. Liz Hawthorne also coordinated two back-to-back forums in Windsor with assistance from Susan Gorin, moderator, Nancy and Willard Richards, Carol Adams, Ann Berens and Robin Berens, timekeeper.

The Sonoma forum was coordinated by Jane Ernsberger and George Ellman and there was a good number in attendance to hear the City Council candidates. The Rohnert Park forums were coordinated by Willard Richards with assistance from Janie Hawker, Barbara Toohey, Alice Richardson, Carole Bennett, moderator, Nancy Richards, timekeeper, Railey Album, Edith Mendez, Alice Richardson and Rosalie Gillmore. The Chamber of Commerce-sponsored City Council forum was moderated by Susan Gorin. State Farm Insurance in Rohnert Park sponsored a 7th State Assembly District forum with Sandy Benson as moderator and Louisa Leavitt as timekeeper.

The Petaluma City Council forum was coordinated by LWVSC and AAUW. An audience of about 60 attended to hear five candidates. Carol Ann Fontana-Cary, Barbara Parker Narita, Stan Gold, Railey Album and timekeepers Sandy Benson and Rosalie Gillmore worked together with members of the AAUW. The Sebastopol

Chamber of Commerce-sponsored City Council forum asked for a timekeeper and Patrick O'Toole volunteered.

LWVSC received a few requests to put on forums that could not be filled because we lacked volunteers, so, a packet of material was mailed to the groups to help them conduct their own forums.

There were over two dozen requests for Pros and Cons speakers, coordinated by Janie Hawker, that were filled by the LWVSC's eloquent and articulate speakers in addition to three requests for speakers where personal presentations could not be filled and were accommodated by showing the Pros and Cons videotape that the LWV Ventura County prepared.

Several of the forums and the Pros and Cons videotape purchased from LWVSC were broadcast on the community access channels and KRCB-TV.

There were outreach events, such as The September Project on 9/11 at 11 Sonoma County Library branches, the Sonoma block party on 9/10, and the Roshambo Winery event on 9/11, the fifth annual Sonoma County Book Fair on 9/18, and the Harvest Fair at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds on 10/1-3, to name specific events.

The army of LWVSC volunteers who deliver voter registration forms to locations around Sonoma County perform a vital task and the rewards of that work were evident when volunteers who sat at tables at various events asked, "Are you registered to vote?" Many people replied, "Yes, I am." In some cases, those responding offered their opinions and party

affiliation without being asked! The Sonoma County Harvest Fair was the highlight; 125 voter registration forms were distributed over the three-day period as reported by Carol Ann Fontana-Cary who coordinated the volunteers.

The League's Voters Service effort includes a comprehensive online election information service, *Smart Voter*. At this writing, 60 local candidates have posted their biographical information and their priorities. Some have included a statement of political philosophy and a list of endorsements. There are links on local contest pages to news and analysis, and forums and rebroadcasts of forums are listed. Please check the website at www.smartvoter.org for election information.

The League of Women Voters' non-partisan and unbiased reputation has preceded it judging by the many requests from individuals and groups who asked for LWVSC's help in putting on forums and in requesting



Photo by Todd Cary



Photo by Greg Scheiner

speakers for Pros and Cons at their events. The League has created a credible reputation that should make us all proud.

There will be a Voters Service committee meeting on Tuesday, November 16, at 10:45 AM in the Santa Rosa League office immediately following the Action Committee meeting. The meeting is open to all League members. At this meeting, we can discuss and analyze the results of the November 2 election.

Voters Service committee: Carol Adams, Railey Album, Margaret Alt, Carrie Anabo, Dina Angress, Glenice and Lars Anderson, Joanne Argyres, Ruth Belmont, Carole Bennett, Les Bennett, Marty Bennett, Sandy Benson, Ann Berens and Robin Berens, Betty Ann Bruno, Clifton Buck-Kaufman, Lynn Camhi, Phyllis Clement, George Ellman, Andrea English, Jane Ernsberger, Carol Ann Fontana-Carey, Lucille Foster, Rosalie Gillmore, Jean Gilmore, Stan Gold, Susan Gorin, Chlele Gummer, Janie Hawker, Paula Hawkes, Liz and Bob Hawthorne, Olive Horrell, Yvonne Horton, Lynda Hungerford, Marian Jones, Marlene Kaulum, Jim and Kay Kline, Jerome Kohl, Louisa Leavitt, Nancy Lewis, Susannah Likins, Edith Mendez, Leena Merritt, Eliza Meyn, Margaret Millner, Susan Milstein, Barbara Parker Narita, Joan Neff, Patrick O'Toole, Steve Rabinowitsh, Caroline Ramberg, Nancy Richards and Willard Richards, Alice Richardson, Freya Richardson, Nancy Richardson, Bernice Rothberg, Ethel and Stuart Schy, Amy Southwick, Alice Staller, Phyllis Stanley, Adrienne and Len Swenson, Fran Tanti, Barbara Taylor, Barbara Toohey, Bonnie Vegod, Joyce Walker, Leslie Warner, Roger White and Nancy Wilkins.

Rosalie Gillmore

IF YOU DON'T USE IT OR WANT IT THEN GIVE IT TO US!



A SILENT AUCTION of donated quality items suitable for gift-giving (or keeping?) has become a regular feature of the LWVSC HOLIDAY PARTY. Proceeds from this fundraiser help to pay the rent on the League's office.



Please search your cupboards, closets and wine cellar for appropriate donations: bric-a-brac, books, jewelry, vases, etc. Then call Phyllis Clement, 823-0925, or Janie Hawker, 584-5210, to arrange for a pick-up of the merchandise.



The HOLIDAY PARTY (see p. 1) is a festive, end-of-the-year get-together. Plan to be there. And remember! Your donations will make the SILENT AUCTION a financial success as well as much fun for the participants.



Janie Hawker

OCTOBER BOARD BRIEFS

The following matters were covered at our October 5 board meeting:

- LWVSC was well represented at Bay Area League Day on Oct. 2 in Sausalito. Copies of the Water Report were distributed.
- At the Harvest Fair on October 1st, 2nd and 3rd, LWVSC registered 56 voters and distributed an additional 69 voter registration forms.
- Corol Ann is seeking members willing to help publicize League events in the local press while Laurie Hall recuperates from a back injury.
- Beth Martinez has agreed to represent LWVSC in the Sonoma County United Nations Association. (Beth also is the association's vice president.)
- Leena Merritt will represent LWVSC on the Sonoma County Recycling Task Force. Linda Curry will represent LWVSC on the Russian River Watershed Council.
- The Water Report is available for distribution. Copies will be given to each of the 21 Bay Area Leagues, the Sonoma County library branches, the city councils and all of the participants in the study. Copies of the report will be sent to other non-LWVSC members at a cost of \$7.00 to cover printing, shipping and handling. The entire report also will be posted on our website.
- LWVSC members are encouraged to participate in the activities of the City of Santa Rosa's Community Advisory Board, which was established by charter amendment to serve as a bridge for communications between the city government and its residents. Meetings will be held throughout the City in October. See <http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/>.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Milstein

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL OCTOBER 30

The World Affairs Council of Sonoma County, the United Nations Association of Sonoma County, and the Social Sciences Department of Santa Rosa Junior College are co-sponsoring a film festival with the following documentaries:

Stolen Childhoods

(Brazil/Kenya/Indonesia/Nepal/Mexico/USA)

Discovering Dominga (Guatemala/USA)

The Shaman's Apprentice (Surinam/USA)

Saturday, Oct. 30

1:00 - 5:35 PM

Newman Auditorium, SRJC

General Public: \$8.00, Students: \$5.00, Parking: \$3.00

SANTA ROSA RAIL STATION DEVELOPMENT

League requests full public scrutiny of the TORPA.



Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot was constructed of locally quarried stone in 1904 on the site of an earlier two-story wood-frame depot.

While there has been much publicity for the reunification of Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa, another major downtown project is proceeding with little public notice. Plans are being made for the development of the vacant land between Third and Sixth Streets on the opposite side of the tracks from the restored railroad station. The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) District owns this land, and some of it will be used for a platform and facilities for passenger rail. Roughly four acres will be available for other uses. What should be built there? Or, of greater importance, who decides what should be built there and what is the process for making that decision?

This spring, the Redevelopment Agency established an 11.5-acre redevelopment project that includes this property as well as the building being renovated for the Actors Theater, the dance hall, the blue building next to the water tower that the SRJC Culinary Institute is considering leasing, the empty cannery building on Third Street beside Santa Rosa Creek, and the white concrete building south of Third Street between the railroad tracks and the creek. This project is known as the Transit Oriented Project Redevelopment Area (TORPA). For many years, the Sonoma County Food & Wine Center has been collecting endorsements to build a facility on the SMART property, and it has been high on the list of City Council priorities for a couple of years. Little information is available to the public on their plans.

On October 5, the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency held a joint Study Session in the Mayors Conference Room to discuss plans for the TORPA. The League of Women Voters submitted these comments in writing:

- The public owns the SMART property, and planning for its development ought to be a public process.

- Study sessions such as this one should be held in the City Council Chambers and televised, so they are accessible to more citizens than can fit in the Mayor's Conference Room.
- Planning the development of the SMART property is at the heart of planning the future of Sonoma County. Instead of traffic congestion, the best long-term solution for providing mobility and a good life-style is adequate public transit combined with transit-friendly land use planning. There are reasons to be concerned about the planning process:
 - The existing conceptual plan responded to neighbors' desires to have most of the acreage of the SMART property covered by plazas and parking. A councilmember has frequently said he believes the neighbors should dominate the planning process.
 - The Study Session was held in a venue accessible to very few members of the public.

The League's comments were accompanied by a letter written jointly by the LWV of the Bay Area and the LWVSC to the SMART Board in August 2003 asking that SMART require Santa Rosa to propose a dense development of this property that would provide income and riders for SMART. The joint letter also requested that housing be included in the development. This letter was written to the SMART Board because SMART owns the property and can say what is done with it. Also, SMART may be more interested in a truly transit-oriented development than is the Santa Rosa City Council.



The Cannery on W. Third Street. Built in 1917 by California Packing Corporation (Cal Pack) on the site of an earlier cannery building that had been destroyed by fire.

At the Study Session, the Redevelopment Agency described plans to issue a Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals (RFQ/RFP) inviting developers to propose plans for the SMART property. The RFQ/RFP package should be available in December. Then we will know more.

Willard Richards

LWVC EDUCATION POSITION UPDATE CONSENSUS MEETING

Friday, November 19, 12:30 - 3:00 PM
Santa Rosa Central Library Forum Room

Why don't our schools ever have enough money to educate our children? What is Prop. 98, and how does that guarantee funding for our schools? Doesn't the state lottery provide enough money? These are just some of the questions we will answer at our meeting.

LWVC has been studying K-12 education for the past year, and it is time for you to help us update our state position. We will talk about various aspects of education during meetings in November and December.

At this meeting, we hope that you will join us for a lively panel discussion among our community's education experts to talk about school finance. After the panel discussion, League members will help us come to consensus.

Here are other sources of information on school finance:

Q&A: The Basics of California's School Finance System
http://www.edsource.org/pub_qa_finance.cfm

Q&A: The School District Budget Process
http://www.edsource.org/pub_qa_budget.cfm

How California Ranks: The state's expenditures for K-12 education
http://www.edsource.org/pub_abs_ranks03.cfm

Bring a brown bag lunch and come join us!

If you are interested in joining the committee, call Susan Gorin, 525-8335.

NEW MEMBERS (LOCAL)

Barbara Battenfeld
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541-0517

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NEW MEMBERS (NATIONAL)

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ROSTER CHANGES

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537-6760

Change from Individual to Household Membership:

Susan Milstein & Elliot Morrison

WHAT IS A STRUCTURAL BUDGET DEFICIT?

This is the ninth in a series of articles on the California budget crisis provided by LWVC. For the full series, go to <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/budget/>.

Many experts believe that California faces a "structural budget deficit." This means that with the current revenue structure (e.g., taxes, fees, and other sources), the state has insufficient income to maintain services at the current level.



Each year, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) publishes a forecast of the California fiscal situation for five years into the future. In November 2003, the LAO's estimate was that without corrective action, the ongoing gap between revenue and expenditures is about \$14 billion dollars, assuming that the state continued funding the Vehicle license Fee backfill, as Governor Schwarzenegger has promised it will.

"It [the PPIC] identifies the drop-off in revenues from personal income tax on stock options and capital gains as the major factor in the decline in General Fund Revenues, and asserts that these revenues are unlikely to return to peak values in the foreseeable future."

The LAO has also analyzed the budget the governor has proposed for 2004-2005. This budget proposes significant reductions in expenditures. These included reduced expenditures for education, transportation, social services and a ten percent reduction in Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. There are increases in fees, such as increased tuition for higher education, but no increase in general taxes. According to the LAO, about 37 percent of the budget savings are one-time savings. The office concludes that even if the budget were enacted as proposed, the General Fund would face a shortfall of about \$88 million for 2004-05, and a continuing structural deficit of about \$7 billion dollars.

In its analysis of the 2004-05 budget, the California Budget Project (CBP) attempted to refute the governor's assertion that, "If the government had simply spent at the same rate that California's economy has grown, the state budget would be balanced today." According to the CBP, state spending has not kept pace with growth in personal income. In addition to the loss of revenues from the decline in collection of the personal income tax, the CBP identifies several other areas of revenue loss. These include sales tax (service consumption is growing and not taxed), Internet, mail order sales and the phase-out of federal estate taxes. Moreover, corporations are paying a smaller percentage of their net incomes in corporate income taxes. Shifting costs to local governments also account for some of the savings in the 2004-05 budget.

In its publications the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is essentially in agreement with the CBP and the LAO about the reasons for the current budget situation. It also identifies the drop-off in revenues from personal income tax on stock options and capital gains as the major factor in the decline in General Fund Revenues, and asserts that these revenues are "unlikely to return to peak values in the foreseeable future." The

PPIC also points out that voter initiatives limit the flexibility of the state's legislature.

An ongoing activity of the PPIC has been a series of statewide surveys of Californians. A recent survey showed widespread support for the governor but widespread distrust of state

government in general. Respondents are generally committed to funding education, local governments, and health and human services. In the responses to the survey about 64 percent stated they would be willing to pay higher taxes to maintain current levels of support for K-12 education. They overwhelmingly opposed an increase in the Vehicle license Fee or state sales tax. They support "sin" taxes-although even doubling the state's tax on cigarettes would have only a very small effect on the state's revenue stream.

With the proposals being considered and the acclaim a state budget agreement will engender, it appears that California's structural budget deficit will continue.

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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 _____

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.

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 _____

NOVEMBER 2004 CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.

Date	Time	Place	Description
Wednesday, November 3	10:00 AM – 12:00 noon	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Board Meeting League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Tuesday, November 9	12:00 noon	1601 Marylyn Circle Petaluma	International Relations Study Group "The November 2 nd Election" See p. 3.
Tuesday, November 16	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee
Tuesday, November 16	10:45 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Voters Service
Thursday, November 18	10:30 AM – 12:00 noon	87 Greenwood Court Santa Rosa	Book Club Robert Reich's <i>Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America.</i> See p. 2.
Friday, November 19	12:30 – 3:00 PM	Santa Rosa Central Library Forum Room	Education Position Update Consensus Meeting See p. 7.

LINK TO CURRENT CALENDAR