



# THE VOTER

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 9, No. 7

October 2004

### LWVSC SPONSORS ELECTION FORUMS

#### Monday, 10/4/04

Sonoma County Transportation Tax, Measure M (Paula Hawkes, moderator) **and**

Santa Rosa Public Safety Tax, Measure O from 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Santa Rosa City Council Chambers (Alice Richardson, moderator) \*

#### Wednesday, 10/6/04

Petaluma City Council forum from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in the Petaluma City Council Chambers

#### Thursday, 10/7/04

Healdsburg City Council **and**

North Sonoma County Hospital District from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in the Raven Theatre (Susan Gorin, moderator) \*

#### Friday, 10/8/04

7<sup>th</sup> State Assembly District from 7:00 to 8:00 PM in the Santa Rosa City Council Chambers (Betty Ann Bruno, moderator)

#### Tuesday, 10/12/04

Windsor Unified School District from 6:30 to 7:30 PM **and**

Windsor Town Council from 7:40 PM to 8:40 PM in the Windsor High School Theatre (Susan Gorin, moderator) \*

#### Wednesday, 10/20/04

Rohnert Park City Council at 7:00 PM in the Spreckels Performing Arts Center, Rohnert Park (Carole Bennett, moderator)

#### Thursday, 10/21/04

Sebastopol Union School District at 7:00 PM in the Pine Crest School (Alice Richardson, moderator)

\*Two forums will be held back-to-back.



March primary election forum moderated by Betty Ann Bruno

Voters Service is extremely active in planning forums, *Pros and Cons* discussions, and other voter outreach activities in anticipation of the November 2<sup>nd</sup> election. See the full Voters Service report on p. 5.



**Be an informed voter.  
Check out *Smart Voter*.  
See p. 5.**

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**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY  
GROUP**

The International Relations study group meets the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 12, at 12:00 noon at 226 Windsor Drive, Petaluma.

The topic planned for the *Great Decisions* discussion is: **“Europe Today: a triple challenge.** Relations between the U.S. and Europe, considered unshakable during the cold war, have experienced significant rifts in the past few years. Genetically modified food, trade and the war on terrorism have created major strains. How will the transatlantic relationship take shape in the next year?”



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 questions, please contact Rosalie Gillmore at 769-8826 or r.gillmore@worldnet.att.net.

**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, October 21, is Tracy Kidder’s *Mountains Beyond Mountains: the Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World.* Kidder is a Pulitzer Prize winning author. His subject, Dr. Paul Farmer, is a medical anthropologist, a physician, a visionary and a recipient of many awards, including a MacArthur



genius award. Farmer is working to bridge the health care gap between rich and poor and discovering better modes of treatment at the same time. Join us at 2191 Siesta Lane, Santa Rosa to discuss his inspirational work.

On Thursday, November 18, the group will discuss Robert Reich’s book: *Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America.*

Lynda Hungerford

**SEPTEMBER BOARD BRIEFS**

The following is a summary of the announcements made and actions taken at the September 7 meeting of LWV of Sonoma County’s Board:

- The board authorized the printing of 500 copies of the LWVSC water report, which is nearly ready for publication.
- The board regretfully accepted the resignation of Rosalie Gillmore as Chair of Voters Service, effective January 1, 2005. Rosalie was commended for the phenomenal job she is doing in coordinating a plethora of public forums and voter registration drives leading up to the November election.
- The board authorized Susan Gorin to pursue an invitation to cosponsor a forum with the Living Wage Coalition and the Santa Rosa Junior College on Proposition 72, which seeks to reverse the Health Insurance Act passed by the Legislature last year. The act requires firms with more than 50 workers to provide affordable health care benefits to all employees.
- A second dues notice will be sent out to members who have yet to pay their dues. The roster of current members will be compiled in October.

Susan Milstein

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The level of activity in **Voters Service** continues at a fever pitch. Rosalie Gillmore has gone well beyond the call of duty in arranging forums, registration drives and other related activities involving a great many of our members. Janie Hawker is busy with our Pros/Cons presentations around the county. Please check the schedule of Voters Service events and plan to attend one. This will allow you to see what a great job League does in this arena and you might be enticed into participating in these events in the future.



At the moment, we are in need of a member who is willing to work on **Public Relations** for our League. This involves getting information about League into the local media and community calendars and generally trying to keep visibility of the League high. If you can help in this endeavor, please contact me.

Corol Ann

## VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 2

The LWVC supports Propositions 59 and 72, opposes 69.



### Proposition 59 - Access to Government Information



**SUPPORT**

LWVC supports this constitutional amendment that would make public access to meetings and public records a constitutional right. It puts the principles behind the Brown Act and other open meeting laws into the state constitution. LWVC President Jackie Jacobberger signed the ballot argument in support of this measure and serves on the campaign committee.

### Proposition 69 - DNA Samples. Collection. Database Funding



**OPPOSE**

The LWVUS position on Individual Liberties states "The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged." DNA samples can help solve crimes by comparing stored DNA of known offenders to DNA evidence from other crimes. However, while fingerprints are useful only as a form of identification, DNA contains an amount of personal and private data which makes its collection extraordinary. DNA samples "can provide insights into the most personal family relationships and the most intimate workings of the human body, including the likelihood of the occurrence of over 4,000 types of genetic conditions and diseases." (ACLU)

The LWVC opposition to Proposition 69 is based on the invasion of privacy implicit in collecting DNA samples from all persons charged with felonies, rather than, as at

present, those convicted of "certain sex offenses or other violent crimes."

### Proposition 72 - Referendum Petition to Overturn Amendments to Health Care Coverage Requirements



**SUPPORT**

The text of the ballot pamphlet will explain the YES and NO votes this way, "A YES vote on this measure means: Certain employers would be required to provide health coverage for their employees and, in some cases dependents, through either (1) paying a fee to a new state program primarily to purchase private health insurance coverage or (2) arranging directly with health insurance providers for health care coverage. The state would also establish a new program to assist lower-income employees to pay their share of health care premiums.

"A NO vote on this measure means: The state would continue to allow employers to choose whether to provide health insurance for their employees and dependents. The state would not establish a new program to provide assistance to low-income employees in paying premiums for health care coverage at their workplace." The LWVC decided in January 2004 to support retaining the Health Care Coverage Requirements of SB 2. In order to retain the current law, one must vote YES on Proposition 72. Thus the LWVC supports Proposition 72.

### The LWVSC supports Measure M- Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County

The League supports this measure because it provides the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District the funds it needs to keep work moving forward to restart passenger rail, it doubles the funding for bicycle paths, and increases transit funding. The measure will also make Sonoma a self-help county, which greatly improves the ability to compete for state and federal funds. 40% of the quarter percent sales tax will go to adding an HOV lane to Highway 101, 20% to maintaining local streets and roads, and 20% to local projects to reduce congestion. A quarter percent sales tax will be on the November 2006 ballots in Sonoma and Marin counties to complete the local funding needed for SMART.

## THIS MONTH'S VOTER PUBLISHED FROM POLAND!

Thanks to the Internet, the VOTER editors are accomplishing their task while traveling on business and vacation in Warsaw and Krakow. On the right, Jack and Marsha Dupre are pictured in front of the Memorial to the Heroes of the Warsaw Uprising, which is being commemorated this year on its 60th anniversary.

Na zdrowie!



## MEMBER PROFILE

### Lynn Camhi

If you have a magic key to unlock voter apathy, Lynn Camhi wants it. Last month she learned that a neighbor, 45 years old and a high school graduate, had never voted. She sat him down and directed him to register right then.

Where does such zeal come from?



Photo by Todd Cary

Camhi spent her first 11 years in Brooklyn. Then her parents moved to Vanport, Oregon where her father worked in the shipyards. Located on the Columbia River, Vanport was then the second largest city in Oregon. Not long after Camhi's family moved to Portland, Vanport was completely destroyed by a flood.

Camhi says, "Since we knew a

lot of people who lived there, our home became a refuge for some of the flood victims."

Those early eleven years in New York City were not quite enough for Camhi. Between graduating from the University of Washington with a BA in drama—with an emphasis on directing—and beginning graduate school at UCLA, she returned to New York City for a year to work in an office and enjoy New York culture.

Back in school at UCLA, she met her husband, the photographer Morrie Camhi. After earning her masters degree, she used her directing skills on "the domestic route."

Camhi lives in the dome house that she and Morrie built here in Petaluma in 1979 after seeing a model that had been constructed for a home show at the fairgrounds. "The dome was within our budget, interesting and environmentally sound." Now the surrounding fruit trees are mature and the raised vegetable beds are prolific.

Camhi's League membership was, in the beginning, a mistake. In the early '70's she sent in a contribution in honor of a college friend. This was interpreted as joining the League and she started to receive information. Since then, she has served our League in many different offices, including president.

Her greatest pleasure in League has come from the studies she has worked on, especially the state and local finance study and the health care study. The committees were terrific, and there were many informative interviews.

In addition to her League work, Camhi has served on advisory committees for the Community Foundation and Family Action.

As for that magic key, she says, "The vote is the only weapon most people have. They don't have money, and they don't have influence, but they do have their vote."

Lynda Hungerford

## THE HOLIDAYS ARE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK!



Although it might seem a bit early..... stop **right now**, and mark your calendar for Sunday, December 5th, 3 to 6 PM for our annual Holiday Party.

And, no, it is NOT too early to be thinking of your holiday schedule! You won't want to miss this delightful opportunity to gather with League members and guests for a few hours of merry making, so, be sure you save the date.

This year, **we** will be going to the east side of the county—to Sonoma. Look for details on the specific place and directions in the November issue of the VOTER.

We shall also be holding our traditional White Elephant Silent Auction as a fundraiser to pay for our office rental space. Each year this activity provides us not only with some entertainment, but with the opportunity to add to the monies budgeted to run the League office as well.

If you have some unused treasure you would like to donate, please contact me, Sandy Benson, 763-1629, and I will arrange to pick it up. We are interested in a broad range of items from jewelry, dishes, decorative pieces, artwork, and unused gadgets of all kinds to wine, antiques and gift certificates for merchandise or services.

Looking forward to seeing you on December 5th!

## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS WORKSHOP

### Participants will learn to teach model UN and to conduct a model UN simulation

Do you want to learn about Model UN from a retired US representative to the UN Security Council? Attend the workshop on October 26 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM at the Sonoma County Office of Education, 5340 Skylane Boulevard, Santa Rosa.



James Wilkinson, retired from the UN, and Robert McNamara, SSU professor, will facilitate the workshop.

Call Beth Martinez, 526-4178 for information.

The *Pros and Cons* for the November 2<sup>nd</sup> election published by LWVC are available online at <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/edfund/elections/2004nov/index.html>

## VOTERS SERVICE

### Education and Voter Registration Activities Peak in September and October

A big **THANK YOU** to all the members who have helped with the forums, Pros and Cons, voter outreach events, distribution of voter registration forms, the September Project on September 11<sup>th</sup> at the 11 branches of the Sonoma County Public Library, the Harvest Fair at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds on October 1 - 3, Smart Voter, and passing on telephone messages received at the office that are Voters Service related.

The LWVSC has already held three forums:

- **Rohnert Park Recall Election (Carole Bennett, moderator) on August 18** An employee of PBS called to ask for a copy of the forum videotape because they are making a documentary called, "Beyond the Dream." It is a four-part series on California in the last 30 years and two of the series will be on Indian casinos and politics in the cities. The documentary will be aired on PBS sometime in the fall of 2005. I will keep you posted.
- **Sonoma City Council (George Ellman, moderator) on September 22**
- **Santa Rosa City Council (Carole Bennett, moderator) on September 27**

See p. 1 for a listing of the October forums. In addition, Janie Hawker and her staff of volunteers are covering a number of requests for Pros and Cons speakers and the library branches will provide the Easy Voter Guide to the public.

There will be a Voters Service committee meeting on Tuesday, October 19, at 10:45 AM in the Santa Rosa League office immediately following the Action Committee meeting. The meeting is open to all League members.

**Rosalie Gillmore**

Voters Service Chair

## SMART VOTER

<http://www.smartvoter.org>

Before you vote, check Smart Voter, the League's comprehensive on-line election information service.

At Smart Voter, you will find your polling place with a map; a personalized ballot with candidate statements and ballot issues; and, after the election, election results on the national, state and local levels. You'll also find links to other on-line sources of information, and on the page for any contest, there will be information about any League forums and debates.

Smart Voter was twice a finalist for the Stockholm Award, considered the Nobel Prize of the information communication technology world. And just last year the Tech Museum named Smart Voter one of 25 laureates and a finalist for the Knight Ridder Excellence Award.

One Smart Voter user wrote, "You've helped me educate myself more than I ever have about the upcoming election. This site helps me take care of my voting concerns—all the flyers, calls, ads, etc. don't even come close to your help." And, close to home, in an editorial on September 7, 2004, the *Sonoma Index-Tribune* praised Smart Voter for its coverage of state races.

When you go to Smart Voter, if you discover that candidates in one of your districts have not entered information, let them know that you missed them there. They can enter or change information up to 8:00 PM on Monday, November 1.

Since 1998 when Smart Voter first came to Sonoma County, in comparable elections every year sees more candidates participating and more voters coming to the site. If you can make phone calls, you have a skill that Smart Voter sorely needs at this time of year, and if you're computer savvy, you can easily learn to do some of the on-line work Smart Voter will involve through September and October.

Wouldn't 2004 be a good year to join the Smart Voter team? Leave a message for me at the office or e-mail me at [LH@sonic.net](mailto:LH@sonic.net).

**Lynda Hungerford**



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## RECENT ACTION

The largest effort by the Action Committee during the last month has been on the revision of the campaign finance ordinance for Santa Rosa City Council elections. When the Santa Rosa Council revised the campaign finance ordinance a year ago, they provided a modest amount of public financing as required by the recent revisions in the City Charter. However, they did not require candidates to agree to limit their campaign spending to be eligible for public financing.

In June, Councilmember Bender asked that the campaign finance ordinance be revisited. In August, the Council acted on Subcommittee recommendations and voted to require that candidates either raise \$1000 or collect 100 signatures to qualify for public financing. After much debate about the dollar value of the spending limit, the Council also voted for an eligibility requirement. To receive public financing, candidates must sign an agreement to voluntarily limit their campaign spending to \$55,000 and to agree to pay a penalty of twice the amount spent over the limit if they spend more. Several League members spoke in favor of a limit of \$50,000 or less, and this may have helped influence the selection of a limit in the lower end of the range being considered.

It is necessary that ordinances adopted by the Council come back and be approved at a later Council meeting on the consent calendar. When this occurred in September, a Councilmember requested that the campaign finance consent item be moved to the end of the Council meeting. When the Council returned to the campaign finance ordinance after 9:30 PM, the Councilmember recommended that the ordinance be returned to the Subcommittee to consider increasing the voluntary spending limit for candidates who are the object of a hit piece. Again there was a debate that included comments from a League member. The result was the Councilmember withdrew the proposed revision and the Council unanimously voted for the campaign finance ordinance adopted two weeks earlier.

Other actions this month included a letter to the Governor to sign AB2106, the California Tax Expenditure Accountability Bill, which requires disclosure and analysis of the many California tax loopholes. Letters were also written to the Governor, Secretary of State, and Director of Finance to release the funds to print the Easy Voter Guide. These funds were held back because of the financial issues now surrounding the Secretary of State. These letters were written in response to Calls to Action by the LWV of California.

### 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.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

There are many opportunities for League members to become involved in their communities and to make a difference. What we can accomplish is limited primarily by the willingness of League members to take on an issue, develop an understanding of the various interests, and lead the way.

Sometimes, a small effort, such as a letter to the editor, can be effective. If you know of a situation where the League should speak out, please contact me (see below).

Members of the Action Committee are now working on the following projects:

- The campaign supporting Measure R, campaign finance, in Petaluma.
- The campaign supporting the Sonoma County Transportation Authority Measure M, The Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County, a quarter percent sales tax for transportation and transit projects.
- The ballot measure for SMART passenger rail and bicycle path, a quarter percent sales tax to appear on the November 2006 ballots in Sonoma and Marin Counties.
- A Symposium on Smart Growth sponsored in cooperation with other organizations.
- The California Clean Money Campaign for public financing of statewide elections.
- Planning for the redevelopment project that includes the SMART property across the tracks from the railroad station near Railroad Square.

The League of Women Voters of California has positions supporting Propositions 59 (Public Records, Open Meetings) and 72 (Health Care Coverage Requirements) and a position opposing Proposition 69 (DNA Samples, Collection, Database, Funding). Therefore, it is appropriate to take action on these propositions.

In the recent past, League members have worked on issues related to water, campaign finance ordinances in several cities, ordinances limiting wood burning in highly polluting woodstoves, etc. The above list is short on action on issues of concern to women and children, so help in those areas would be especially welcome.

If you are interested in working on these or other issues or are just interested in learning about action in Sonoma County, come to the Action Committee meeting in the League office at 10:00 AM on the third Tuesday of each month. These meetings are listed on the calendar, last only 45 minutes, and are immediately followed by the Voters Service meetings. If you have a question or want to discuss possible action, call me at home, (707) 575-7160.

**Willard Richards**

Action Committee Chair

**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](http://www.SchulzMuseum.org)  
Click on Membership.



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**League of Women Voters® of Sonoma County Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

# CALENDAR