



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SONOMA COUNTY

Volume 11, No. 8

October 2006

'Tis the season to vote. And it has never been easier to do your homework. Smart Voter is patiently waiting for you at www.smartvoter.org.

Let me give you a specific example of the kind of information you can find on state Proposition 1A. Of course there is the Secretary of State's information and the Pro and Con for that proposition, but there is also the full Article from the League's In Depth, links to detailed campaign finance information, a link to the California Budget Project's analysis of the fiscal effect, and a link that produces an up-to-the minute Google News Search. When I linked on that search just now, the top item was an article that was only three hours old.



If you enter your address and zip code on the entry screen, you will see:

- your polling location
- your precinct number
- information about just those races that will appear on your ballot

Information about the candidates depends on their participation, since they provide their own biographical information, priorities, political philosophy, and endorsements. Candidates have virtually unlimited space, but they must talk about themselves, not their opponents. Hence you see the "positive" side of all candidates. There will also be a Google News Search for our local contests.

All this information is in one place www.smartvoter.org.

Finally, you can help the Smart Voter project in a couple of ways

- By congratulating candidates on their participation and by encouraging those who haven't built their site yet to do so.
- By telling your friends and neighbors about the site.

Lynda Hungerford

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Of Sonoma County**

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BOOK CLUB CORNER

Politics, religion, and their ilk are supposedly off limits for discussion in proper social groups. What do those of us do who find the weather and the like just plain tedious? We join a book group. And for those interested in politics the League book group is the place to be at 10:30 AM on the third Thursday of the month.



If you have particular books you would like to talk about, then the October 19 meeting is a must attend. At that meeting we will pick the books to discuss for the next six meetings or so.

At the October meeting we will also discuss a chapter from Martha Nussbaum's upcoming book, *The Fixed Star*. Nussbaum is a prolific author, Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, and a person long committed to the examination and defense of human rights. In this chapter she examines Roger Williams's distinctive view of the concept of freedom of conscience in an attempt to recover a peculiarly American tradition of tolerance. You may call the office for a copy of the chapter or e-mail me for a link (it is a long link).

If you have questions about the Book Group, please call me or send me a message.

Lynda Hungerford
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**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDY
GROUP**

The International Relations discussion group will meet on Tuesday, October 10 at 12 NOON in the **Santa Rosa League office**. It is a brown-bag lunch session.

The topic for discussion will be "**The U.S. and Iran**". The election of Iran's conservative president has raised concern that hardliners will shape policies against U.S. interests. How can the U.S. check Iran's influence in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in the region? How will the U.S. and the international community mitigate the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions?

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 me 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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"The League of Women Voters was honored as the first recipient of the American Bar Association (ABA) Coalition for Justice's Burnhan "Hod" Greeley Award at the ABA's annual meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii on August 4, 2006. The League was recognized for its work promoting public trust and confidence in America's justice system and for its dedication to promoting increased public awareness of the need for a fair and impartial judiciary. The award recognizes extraordinary outreach efforts in this area."



This news item was taken from the LWVUS website. It illustrates the level of confidence the public places in our work. During this election cycle it is very important for us to perform to this very high standard. Our forums offer the voters in our county an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the ballot measures in an environment of fairness and accuracy.

Recently we sent our membership, via e-mail, a "Call to Action" for support of SB 840, California Health Insurance Reliability Act, sponsored by Sheila Kuehl. We are aware that many of you do not wish to have your inboxes filled with unnecessary messages so we limit use of this type of communication. I strongly encourage you to visit our websites and if you wish, sign up to receive updates and calls to action from LWVC and LWVUS.

Participation in our activities can be very rewarding. Remember that our membership meetings are open to everyone so, please consider bringing a friend or neighbor to one of our forums. Several of our members would like to attend some meetings, but do not like to drive after dark. Get the word out to encourage carpooling!

Carol Ann Fontana-Cary

LEAGUE REFLECTS ON 219TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

LEAGUE STATEMENT ON THE 219th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION

Civic Engagement is Key to a Healthy Democracy

Washington, D.C. – The League of Women Voters today joined educational and civic groups encouraging citizens across the country to learn about and reflect on the significance of Constitution Day. The holiday falls each

year on September 17, the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

"Constitution Day presents a unique opportunity for teachers, community leaders and local officials to introduce students and young Americans to the fundamental lessons of our democracy," said national League president Mary G. Wilson. "It also serves as an important reminder of the great emphasis our forefathers placed on key concepts such as responsive government, individual liberties and the separation of powers. Today, it is our responsibility to not only teach those lessons to future generations, but to also work to ensure American citizens and their elected representatives at all levels of government are actively protecting the basic civil liberties we fought to obtain. To that end, Leagues throughout the country are working to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities—and encouraging them to exercise those responsibilities by voting on November 7th."

In 2004, Senator Robert Byrd (D WV) ensured passage of a new provision of federal law, that required all publicly funded educational institutions to provide educational programming on the provisions of the U.S. Constitution. Research has shown that few Americans are knowledgeable about this keystone document of American democracy.

Leagues at all levels undertake a wide range of activities to ensure that the US governmental system works as envisioned in the Constitution. In recent years, the League has focused particularly on issues related to the separation of powers. Many Leagues have undertaken civic education efforts on the importance of an independent judiciary. In addition, at the League's national Convention in June 2006, state and local League delegates called on Congress to revitalize its important role in overseeing the activities of the executive branch. On this anniversary of the U.S. Constitution, the League again urges Congress to play its oversight role as an equally vital branch of government.

"Our League members are proud to join community leaders throughout the country in calling attention to the important role all citizens must play in fostering the kind of strong and vibrant America that our founders envisioned." Wilson concluded. "Our Constitution serves as a living testament to the freedoms we've inherited—and the League of Women Voters stands committed to fostering the hands-on civic participation we need to keep our democracy strong."

To join the League call the LWVSC office at 707-546-5943 or fill out the membership application on page 7 of this VOTER and mail it to 100 E Street, Suite 209, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. For a listing of Constitution Day activities and events in your area, or to learn more about the history of this important day, visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

LWVSC SUPPORTS LOCAL MEASURES



Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District tax measure (Measure R)



Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space (SCAPOS) District tax measure (Measure F)

Your Board recommends:

Support the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District tax measure on the November 7 ballot. If it receives the necessary 2/3 vote, these funds will support the District for 20 years to purchase capital and to operate the rail system. Our League and that of Marin County are in agreement that it is a vital and needed part of a functional transportation system of these two counties. Initially, the trains will run on weekdays between Cloverdale and Larkspur. If the measure passes, there will be a 2+ year period during which we expect the trains will be delivered to this region. During that period, several issues can be resolved. For example, there will likely be corporate agencies that will want to run tourist trains on the tracks controlled by the SMART district. I expect some of them will want to run on weekends. Additionally the North Coast Rail Authority which owns the tracks north of Healdsburg and east of Schellville to Lombard (Napa County) will want to carry freight trains on the SMART tracks. If they can be accommodated, their operations will provide additional revenue for the SMART District to use for operations. Additionally, the district owns considerable properties adjacent to the 14 stations on the line; these too will provide some level of income to the district.

Support Measure F, the continuation of the existing ¼ cent sales tax for the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space (SCAPOS) District. The SCAPOS District has in its life since 1990 preserved over 70,000 acres of land in this county. About 19% of the lands purchased have been designated for city, county and state parklands. In this new measure up to 10% of the revenues can be used to provide access to the parklands not yet opened to the public or to be acquired in the future. The SCAPOS District acquisitions will aid in the preservation of a quality of life that includes significant amounts of non-developed lands. I was on the committee that helped achieve the initial 1990 passage of the measure; now it is asking that these funds be continued after 2010 when the present measure ends. Measure F will help protect important rivers, streams and groundwater. It will preserve beaches and coastal lands. It will preserve working farms, ranches, and orchards. Vote YES for Measure F.

George Ellman

Transportation Land Use

Your Representative on the LWVBA Board

UPDATE FROM THE BAY AREA AUGUST 2006

A special joint meeting of the Interleague Network - North and South was held on Wednesday, August 9 to hear from Ted Droettboom, Regional Program



Planner for the Joint Policy Committee to brief the League members about the "Focusing our Vision" effort in the Bay Area. Ted explained that this is a follow up effort to the "Smart Growth Livability Footprint Project" that the League and others participated in during 2002.

The Vision project will refine the areas where future housing development should occur within the previously agreed upon concept of a Network of Neighborhoods linked by transit, and also to identify key areas to be conserved on the basis of their "resource" value. A draft of the priority housing and conservation areas will be available in December 2006. It will then be circulated widely throughout the Bay Area with hopes of reaching a region-wide agreement on the concept. LWVBA plans to address the Vision project and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process, at our Bay Area League Day on Saturday, January 27, 2007. The Association of Bay Area Governments General Assembly in October 2007 will also feature this project.

For more information, contact Patty Boyle, housing @lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org or me, president@lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org

Linda Craig, President
League of Women Voters of the Bay Area
president@lwvba-ca.org

Chris O'Sullivan, Ph.D.,
Adjunct Professor of History USF
cosponsored by the United Nations Association
Sonoma County and the World Affairs Council
will be speaking on U.S. - European Relations
October 5, 2006 at 7:15
Admission is free to League members, otherwise \$5
Spring Lake Village Auditorium
5555 Montgomery Avenue Santa Rosa
for information Gus Feissel, 537 6706

VOTERS SERVICE

LWVSC is holding five public candidate and proposition forums in Sonoma County.

On Tuesday Sept. 26, 7:00-8:30 PM, in the Cotati City Hall Council Chamber, 201 W Sierra Ave, the three candidates for Cotati City Council will take questions from the public in a forum cosponsored by LWVSC and the Cotati Chamber of Commerce. Edith Mendez will moderate; Janie Hawker will be timekeeper.

On Monday, October 2, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, in the Santa Rosa City Council Chamber, the ten candidates for Santa Rosa City Council will appear in a forum cosponsored by LWVSC and the Santa Rosa Junior College Social Science Department. Betty Ann Bruno will moderate; Nancy Richardson will be timekeeper. This will be broadcast live in Santa Rosa on cable channel 69.

On Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, in the Petaluma Council Chamber, two candidates for mayor and six candidates for city council will appear in a forum cosponsored by LWVSC, the Petaluma AAUW, and the Argus Courier. Barbara Guggemos, AAUW Public Policy chair, will moderate. This forum will be broadcast live in Petaluma on Petaluma Community Access - Channel 28.

On Monday, October 9, from 7:00 - 8:30 PM, at the Santa Rosa City Council Chamber is the California State Proposition 89 & 90 forum presented by LWVSC.

On Tuesday, October 10, from 5:30 - 9:00 PM, in the Windsor High School Theater, candidates for three contests (fire protection district, school board, and town council) will appear in a forum moderated by Ethel Schy. This forum is cosponsored by the Windsor School District and the Windsor Chamber of Commerce. It will be televised later on the Windsor government channel and on Access Healdsburg.

On Thursday, Oct. 19, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, in El Molino High School, Forestville, the six West Sonoma County Union High School District candidates and the two candidates for the Analy District seat on the Junior College Board of Trustees will appear in a forum moderated by Eric Koenigshofer.

Rosalie Gillmore and Carole Bennett are doing two studio forums with Marin LWV. While they are not open to the public, they will be televised on KRCB and PCA. Those contests are the 6th U.S. Congressional District and the 6th California Assembly District.

All of the above forums, except Cotati, will be available online on Smart Voter. The studio forums for other two Junior College Districts, Santa Rosa and Sonoma, will also be televised by CMC and available online in October. At the time of writing this article, replay dates and times are not yet determined.

Amy Southwick

VOTING MACHINE FAILURES

On Friday, September 8, the PBS program **NOW**, with David Brancaccio, on Channel 9, broadcast a 20-minute segment called, *Down for the Count*. After the 2000 Presidential election, Congress legislated that new electronic voting machines be installed in voting precincts throughout the country. The program, **NOW**, explained the problems that continue to exist with the new electronic voting machines that jam and miscount.



Eve Roberson ordered a DVD of the program and it is available for anyone who would like to borrow it for a viewing party or individually. The program may also be viewed on the Internet by going to: PBS, click on Programs A-Z, click N and scroll down to **NOW**. Click the picture with the title, *Down for the Count*, and turn on the volume.

If you have a question, please call me at 769-8826.

Rosalie Gillmore

PROS & CONS

The following Pros & Cons presentations are planned for October.

Len Swenson will present two sessions at Friends' House on October 12 and October 17 (call the Friend's House in Santa Rosa for times). The Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa will hold a public event on October 19 from 3:30 - 5:00 PM. AAUW and the Mother's Club of Sonoma are sponsoring an advertised event on October 25 at the Mother's Club in Sonoma, 7:00 - 9:00 PM.

Those of you who are new to this League and want to help with the presentations but missed the training in September, please contact me, Chlele Gummer, for the materials and instructions. I'm sure there will be many more requests for speakers, and we need everyone's help.

Chlele Gummer

NEWS FROM VOTER OUTREACH

Ever wonder who supplies the Post Offices and libraries with Voter Registration forms? The LWV does. How about banks, schools, community centers? They also get their Voter Registration forms through the volunteer efforts of LWV. Prior to every election the Voter Service Outreach volunteers check the voter supplies at over 240 locations throughout Sonoma County to provide current voting registration forms and dates to our citizens.



Left to right standing are Pat Anton, Rosalie Gillmore, Lynda Hungerford, Les Bennett, Lynn Camhi and Carol Adams. Seated are Eliza Meyn, Jane Ernsberger, Dena Lash.

Voter Registration forms and information cards are provided to these areas twice a year. As you can see it is not a time demanding task and can even be fun! The more people help, the shorter the stops for each volunteer. We need you.

This is a simple and "safe" way to volunteer for the League and very important. Currently, volunteers are needed for the following areas:

- * Sea Ranch, Bodega Bay, Gualala
- * West Santa Rosa (in town)
- * Rohnert Park

Current Outreach Volunteers include: Jane Ernsberger, Marian Jones, Jim and Kay Kline, Elaine Book, Barbara Taylor, Pat Anton, Diane Graner, Les Bennett, Nancy Wilkins, Lynda Hungerford, Eliza Meyn, Carol Ann Fontana-Cary, Lynn Camhi, Alice Staller, Carrie Anabo, Marlene Kaulum, Margaret Millner, Janie Hawker, Sue Scott, and a newcomer, Dena Lash. We thank these volunteers for their time ...and gas!

A second project LWV volunteers are doing as a part of Voter Outreach is registering high school seniors who are old enough to vote. Superintendent Carl Wong has endorsed the project, but we could really use more volunteers either to go into the government classrooms to distribute voter registration forms and emphasize the importance of voting or to sit at a table during lunch hour with registration forms for 18-year-olds. Each volunteer contacts the high school principal and/or government teachers to arrange for the date, time and location of the distribution and collection of the voter

registration forms. Many schools are already covered, but there are plenty of openings because we hope to cover public, private, alternative, and Lewis Adult School, as well as SSU and SRJC.

Please call Carol Adams at 433-6364 or email her at cnadams@sonic.net if you can help with either of these projects. You are needed!

Carol Adams

BOARD BRIEFS

September 5, 2006

The treasurer's report showed a total income for August of \$6665.00 from dues renewals. The total expenditures were \$2217.51, which included LWV Bay Area dues of \$179.00, LWVCA quarterly dues of \$939.00 and \$1000.00 of the \$4502.70 LWVUS annual dues. The Education Fund balance is \$1969.00.

President Carol Ann Fontana-Cary announced that the LWV Sonoma County has signed the 'Argument for' and the 'Rebuttal' of the 'Argument Against' of the SMART proposition on the November ballot. Carol Ann asked members to sign up to sit at the League of Women Voters table at the Harvest Fair, which takes place October 6, 7 and 8.

Willard Richards introduced Ann Berens to present a proposal to increase awareness of the Juvenile Justice System in Sonoma County. The interest group which designed this proposal includes Railey Album, Lynn Canhi, Linda Picton and Katie Sanchez. They propose to further their study of the juvenile justice system and to offer recommendations to the county of areas that require improvement. The Board agreed to approve and support this proposal.

The Board also agreed to support the "Take Back our Streets" march organized by the Council on Aging (Shirlee Zane).

Willard asked the board to approve the forwarding of the LWVC email with the Call to Action on SB840 (Kuehl, California Health Insurance Reliability Act, Universal Health Insurance and Comprehensive Coverage) to the entire LWVSC membership. The Board so approved. The Board also approved sending a letter to the Governor from the LWVSC urging him to sign SB 840.

The Board and Program Committee worked on final details of the September 25 Kick Off meeting. Lynda Hungerford will moderate the forum Propositions 89 and 90 at the October 9 meeting, in the Santa Rosa City Hall Council chamber at 7:00 PM. Amy Southwick, Voters Service chair, listed the eight forums and debates planned so far.

Chlele Gummer



There's something special in your own backyard.

Be a part of it!
 Become a member.
 Become a volunteer.

For Membership call Emily
 @ 579-4452 # 108
 To Volunteer call Kristi
 @ 579-4452 ext. 116

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




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. (\$60.00 for individual annual membership, \$90.00 for household, and \$40.00 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.

OCTOBER 2006 CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are open to the public.

Date	Time	Place	Description
Monday October 2	7:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Santa Rosa City Council Chambers	Santa Rosa City Council candidates' debate
Tuesday October 3	10:00 AM – 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Board Meeting League members are welcome. Board meetings are not open to the public.
Wednesday October 4	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Petaluma City Council Chamber	Petaluma City Council candidates' debate
Thursday October 5	10:00 AM – 12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Voters Service Meeting
Monday October 9	7:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Santa Rosa City Council Chamber	California State Propositions 89 & 90 Forum
Tuesday October 10	12 NOON	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	International Relations Study Group "The US and Iran" See p. 2.
Tuesday October 10	5:30 PM – 9:00 PM	Windsor High School Theater 8695 Windsor Road Windsor	Fire Protection District, School board and Town Council candidates' debate
Tuesday October 17	10:00 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Action Committee
Thursday October 19	10:30 AM	League Office 100 E Street, Suite 209 Santa Rosa	Book Club <i>The Fixed Star</i> by Martha Nussbaum See p. 2.
Thursday October 19	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	El Molino High School 7050 Covey Road Forestville	West Sonoma County High School District and Analy District seat on the Junior College Board of Trustees candidates' debate

Please consult the web calendar - <http://www.lwvsonoma.org/calendar.html> for any additional meeting times and locations.